TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
August 5, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

Historic Preservation Commission Members Present: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Bettie Bond-Vice-Chair, Krystal Carter, and Bennie Gaetano

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Amy Snider-Commercial Zoning Administrator, and Alyson Wuagneux-Board Clerk

---

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting held in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street and via WebEx to order at 3:04 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Carter, to adopt the agenda.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Carter, to adopt the minutes as written.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Discussion of Stoneman's Raid Interpretive Panel Draft Text

Ms. Mitchell discussed the Stoneman's Raid Interpretive Panel. She noted that Commission Member Gaetano and Commission Member Carter had been briefed on the project during orientation. She directed HPC members to page 8 and 9 of the packet, which included the revised draft text that had received the HPC's consensus in June. She explained that feedback from funding partners had since been received and was itemized in a memo on packet pages 10 and 11. She invited discussion on potential edits to the text.

Chair Smyth vocalized his interest in the new commission member's input. He opened discussion with **memo item one**, commenting that the term "raid" may not be historically accurate, suggesting "skirmish" as a more appropriate alternative. He explained that Stoneman's forces were not the occupying troops and that the Home Guard largely retreated, making "battle" an unsuitable descriptor. Ms. Mitchell acknowledged that Civil War Trails had previously used "The Battle of Boone" in their materials, possibly for attention-grabbing purposes. She suggested that "The Skirmish of Boone" could be considered if members preferred. Chair Smyth suggested simply changing the title to "Stoneman's Raid." Vice-Chair Bond favored the suggestion, stating she's never heard the event referred to as anything else.

Chair Smyth emphasized that the panel should include "Stoneman's Raid" prominently, as it is a recognizable term throughout the state. He suggested that if Civil War Trails wished to include "The Skirmish of Boone" as a subtitle, it could be added beneath the main title, but reiterated that "Stoneman's Raid" should remain the primary heading. Ms. Mitchell noted that she would clarify with Civil War Trails and make sure it is at the top.

Ms. Mitchell moved onto **memo item two**, which was to clarify the former courthouse location using the suggestion listed on page 10 of the packet. Chair Smyth stated he's okay with the suggested addition, given the word count allowed for it, unless members would rather use those words to add something else. He suggested putting on the map "original courthouse" and "new courthouse" as a solution. Ms. Mitchell recalled members having discussed that suggestion previously. She noted that she would make sure Civil War Trails adds that information to the map. Vice-Chair Bond favored that plan.

Ms. Mitchell moved onto the **memo item three** on packet page 10, which outlined some grammatical errors in paragraph two with revisions shown on packet page 11.

Discussion moved to the **memo item four** outlined in the memo which was a suggestion to clarify the reference in paragraph two regarding Maj. Myles Keoghs "detachment" of the Twelfth Kentucky Union Volunteer Cavalry. Chair Smyth responded that the distinction may not be significant, noting that military designations were intentionally limited for clarity and space. He emphasized that Keogh was in command of the unit and that "detachment" and "command" could be used interchangeably. However, he acknowledged that Keogh was leading thousands of Union cavalry in a unified advance, not separate groups.

Chair Smyth reviewed the original phrasing, which incorrectly attributed 13 Union loyalists to Keogh's command, when they were actually part of the entire Second and Third North Carolina Mounted Infantry units.

Members discussed whether to use "detachment" or "command." Vice-Chair Bond preferred "command," as it implies cohesion with the larger force. Chair Smyth noted that the sentence already references the 6,000-man cavalry, making the scale clear. Vice-Chair Bond pointed out that "command" already appears in the sentence and "detachment" might help avoid repetition. Chair Smyth agreed and supported using "detachment."

The conversation shifted to the phrase "tasked with." Chair Smyth objected, stating the orders were explicit: "to dismantle the country." He proposed revising the sentence to reflect that the cavalry was ordered; members agreed to use "with orders to 'dismantle the country.'"

Clarification was needed regarding the phrase "of Virginia and North Carolina." Members discussed rephrasing the sentence to "ordered into Virginia and North Carolina to 'dismantle the country'" as a way to reduce confusion. Commission member Gaetano asked for clarity on the term, "country." Chair Smyth clarified that "country" referred to countryside, not nationhood. He favored keeping the suggested revision: "Priority was placed on avoiding battles while also destroying rail lines and materials that could be used by the retreating Confederate Army." Vice-Chair Bond suggested removing "also" for clarity, members agreed.

Ms. Mitchell introduced **memo item five**, returning to the reference of the 13 Union loyalists and the need to clarify their affiliation with the Second and Third North Carolina Mounted Infantry.

Chair Smyth expressed agreement with the suggested revisions on packet page 11, specifically for paragraph six. He noted that middle names were excluded to conserve space and questioned the necessity of including unit designations, especially since Kirk's command is the only one mentioned and the plaque is not about Kirk or his role in Stoneman's Raid. He explained that listing all of Stoneman's units would add significant word count, which had been intentionally avoided.

Ms. Mitchell pointed out the highlighted text in paragraph six could potentially not be included for word count constraints. Chair Smyth suggested simplifying the phrase to "Kirk's command of North Carolina

Mounted Infantry units" instead of listing "Second and Third," though he acknowledged the word savings might be minimal. Ms. Mitchell retrieved the latest draft text for live editing. Chair Smyth recalled that Kirk's forces burned the courthouse, though he wasn't certain of the timing. Vice-Chair Bond expressed surprise that this event was simultaneous with the occupation. Chair Smyth clarified that Stoneman's forces were in Boone for only about 24 hours before moving on. During that time, they arrested nearly every white male of conscriptable age and sent them to a POW camp in Tennessee. He noted this was historically significant but couldn't be included due to space limitations.

Vice-Chair Bond questioned whether or not the burning of the jail needed to be mentioned. Chair Smyth responded that it wasn't essential, especially since the courthouse burning was unrelated to Stoneman's occupation in Boone. Ms. Mitchell confirmed that the courthouse burned in 1873 during a non-military event, and Chair Smyth agreed to remove that reference. Members decided to omit both courthouse and jail references to conserve space.

Ms. Mitchell presented a revised version of the text for review based on the discussion during the meeting, noting the current word count stood at 269, excluding the image caption. Members read the updated text on screen. Chair Smyth reiterated removing "also" from the final sentence of paragraph two and reordering the phrasing to emphasize the destruction of rail lines and avoidance of battle. Vice-Chair Bond proposed adding "and avoiding battle" for smoother flow.

Discussion shifted to paragraph three and the phrase "to your right." Vice-Chair Bond asked whether this could be clarified on the map. Ms. Mitchell explained that the location will be referenced on the map. She explained that Civil War Trails also requested a physical reference in the text for readers standing at the panel. Chair Smyth suggested changing the phrasing to "stood in front of you;" however, Ms. Mitchell explained that due to accessibility and panel placement, the reference of "to your right" was accurate based on the location of Linney Street and the post office. Members understood and agreed that the map imagery would help clarify the location and reader orientation.

Vice-Chair Bond suggested using "requisitioned the Councill *home*" instead of "house." Chair Smyth responded that "house" and "home" are largely interchangeable in this context.

Commission Member Carter noted that the project had progressed significantly since her last involvement. Chair Smyth invited final thoughts. Members felt the text was well-formed, and Chair Smyth asked if everyone was satisfied with the current version. Members agreed to proceed.

(Revised version of Stoneman's Raid Interpretive Panel from HPC) – as discussed during the meeting

Stoneman's Raid

"The Fight Got Real Hot"

(Civil War Trails campaign banner in red bar) Stoneman's Raid

On the morning of March 28, 1865, Union cavalry under Maj. Myles Keogh rode into Boone on the road to your left, surprising about 100 Confederate Home Guard members who had gathered to drill near the courthouse, then located a short distance north of here.

Keogh's detachment was the vanguard of Union Gen. George Stoneman's 6,000-man cavalry command ordered into Virginia and North Carolina to "dismantle the country." Priority was placed on destroying rail lines and material that could be used by the retreating Confederate Army and avoiding battle.

As Keogh's men approached, shots rang out, and some Guardsmen fell back to the home of James W. Councill, which stood to your right. According to one account, Mrs. Councill, hearing the noise, stepped

outdoors with her child in her arms – but hurried back inside after the house was struck by a volley of gunfire.

"The fight got real hot," Sheriff A.J. McBride, one of the Home Guardsmen, recalled. The Union cavalry charged, sending the defenders fleeing up the slopes of Howard's Knob.

Union cavalry poured into town for the rest of the day, and Gen. Stoneman requisitioned the Councill house for his headquarters. Stoneman and most of his force left Boone the next day.

Beginning April 6, Col. George W. Kirk's Second and Third North Carolina Mounted Infantry ("Kirk's Raiders") occupied Boone for several weeks, blockading major routes through the mountains. At least 13 Union loyalists from Watauga County served in the regiments that occupied Boone, and another 5 volunteered with Union forces after Boone's occupation.

Both Union and Confederate soldiers are interred in the nearby Boone Cemetery.

Ms. Mitchell outlined next steps: she will share the revised version with funding partners and the town attorney before forwarding it to Civil War Trails for review. After all parties have reviewed, she explained that the text will eventually be presented to Town Council. She noted that the town attorney had requested to review panel projects. She reiterated that she will ensure all changes and map questions are addressed by Civil War Trails. Ms. Mitchell asked members whether the Watauga County Historical Society should be invited to review the updated version. Chair Smyth recommended doing so to maintain goodwill and ensure they feel included. Vice-Chair Bond agreed, emphasizing the importance of respect and transparency. Ms. Mitchell confirmed she will follow up and report back.

Chair Smyth concluded with a reflection on omitted details, such as the stabling of 9,000 horses at the site of the current county recreation center and the dramatic arrival of Union forces. He noted that Boone had not seen Union troops until their sudden appearance, which was kept secret and executed swiftly. He expressed interest in creating additional historic markers in the future.

Review Boone/Kraut Creek Historic Marker Draft Report

Ms. Mitchell shared that the packet includes a draft report prepared by Dr. Kristen Baldwin Deathridge's students, along with supporting research documentation, photos, and archived materials. One of the new HPC members, Commission Member Melody Oxendine, was part of the student team that worked on the report. Ms. Mitchell shared Commission Member Oxendine's expressed willingness to continue research in the fall semester, depending on her class load.

Ms. Mitchell offered two options for moving forward: members can share questions or feedback now, which she will pass along to Commission Member Oxendine, or they can wait until the September Advisory meeting when she will be present to discuss further.

Ms. Mitchell reiterated that this project is part of the HPC work plan and aligns with recent direction from Town Council. She noted that for the marker location mentioned in the report, HPC can accept the proposed site or suggest alternatives. She further informed members that any proposed location must be forwarded to Town Council for review and to determine next steps, including potential easements or other necessary actions.

Chair Smyth asked for clarification on the marker's location on the map. Ms. Mitchell responded that it is situated in the corner of the Watauga County NC Cooperative Extension (Ag Center). Vice-Chair Bond added that the photo on page 12 of the packet shows a small garden setup at the site.

Chair Smyth then inquired about the size of the marker, word count, and what content should be included. Ms. Mitchell explained that she had provided the students with examples of previous marker reports for

reference. She went on to explain that, unlike the interpretive panel for Stoneman's Raid, this marker will be one of the blue markers, similar to the Councill's Store marker. She noted that the sign company typically follows a general process and that the Councill's Store marker, one of the longer ones, but most markers fall within the 150 to 165-word range. Ms. Mitchell confirmed that the marker will contain only text, with no images, and referenced the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery and the Councill's Store markers as the most recent examples.

Chair Smyth acknowledged the word count guidance and said he was still digesting the material. He encouraged members to identify the most compelling content for inclusion.

Commission Member Carter shared findings from her research, identifying W.F. Miller as William Frank Miller Sr., who initially partnered with the company's owners before buying it. She also found newspaper articles and deed records related to the canning company. Chair Smyth asked if this Miller was connected to Miller Brothers Army Surplus Store. Commission Member Carter responded that this Miller came from North Wilkesboro and wasn't sure about the connection.

Vice-Chair Bond expressed interest in the first paragraph of the report, which describes how Mr. Blair encouraged farmers to recognize the value of their cabbage and pursue better prices. She found the language and story compelling. Chair Smyth compared the story to Mount Olive's pickle plant initiative, noting the importance of visionary leadership in agricultural development. Vice-Chair Bond agreed, emphasizing the role of vision in helping farmers realize the potential of their crops.

Chair Smyth suggested brainstorming different versions of the marker text and refining the narrative. Ms. Mitchell noted that Commission Member Oxendine could potentially provide insight into word choices and content decisions when she returns.

Vice-Chair Bond expressed surprise that Mr. Tuckwiller was mentioned on page eight of the report, noting that he was still alive when her family moved to the area in the 1970s. She shared that his daughter was Joe Miller's first wife and suggested that there might be more material available, especially from USDA archives. Vice-Chair Bond mentioned that USDA provided a significant amount of material now housed in Digital Watauga, including photographs taken by Palmer Blair and other historical images. She speculated that Joseph Miller might have access to his grandfather's - Mr. Tuckwiller – materials.

Chair Smyth proposed tabling the discussion until Commission Member Oxendine could join a future meeting. Ms. Mitchell emphasized the value of Commission Member Carter's research and encouraged her to continue contributing. She suggested that Commission Member Carter and Commission Member Oxendine could collaborate on the project and that HPC could provide direction and consensus at the next meeting.

Vice-Chair Bond pointed out that page 26 of the packet includes a reference to "Our State Magazine," previously known as "The State Magazine," which is now fully digitized. She recalled a presentation on the digitization project and highlighted the historical value of old advertisements, particularly those from Mt. Olive. Vice-Chair Bond found the evolution of Mt. Olive's branding fascinating and noted that the article stating "green cabbage remains a symbol of old mountain ways" would be worth reviewing.

Commission Member Carter shared that she had previously taught that article in her class and has existing research on the topic.

Chair Smyth commented on the importance of selecting key content for the marker, given the word count limitations, and suggested that additional information could be made available online.

Vice-Chair Bond expressed interest in learning more about H. Neil Blair and wondered if he was related to Palmer Blair. She noted that Palmer Blair's granddaughters have shown interest in getting the Blairmont house listed on the National Historic Register and may have relevant materials. Vice-Chair Bond also praised

Rogers Whitener's articles about Boone and Watauga County, particularly one on report page 16 about "cabbage for sauerkraut was an important crop in mountains."

Chair Smyth asked if there was anything else to cover and confirmed that tabling the discussion until Commission Member Oxendine could participate would be appropriate.

Ms. Mitchell explained that she included the materials early to give members time to review them and supported revisiting the topic later. She again acknowledged Commission Member Carter's interest and suggested exploring potential collaboration between Commission Member Carter and Commission Member Oxendine. Chair Smyth concluded that with their input, members could determine the direction for the marker text and finalize the wording.

HPC Recommendation of Chair/Vice Chair Positions

Ms. Mitchell introduced the next item in the packet, explaining that both the current Chair and Vice-Chair had submitted applications for their respective positions. She stated that the next step was to review the applications and make a formal recommendation, which she would then present to Town Council for consideration.

Chair Smyth asked if any members had a strong desire to serve as Chair or Vice Chair. Commission Member Gaetano responded that they did not at this time.

Ms. Mitchell clarified to Commission Members Carter and Gaetano that the Chair and Vice-Chair process was discussed during orientation, referencing Article Two of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), which outlines the responsibilities and procedures for selecting the Chair and Vice-Chair. She noted that although the process typically occurs in July, it was delayed due to postponed meetings and was now being addressed in August. She opened the floor for discussion.

Vice-Chair Bond expressed her willingness to serve and thanked the group for their efforts in keeping her informed. Chair Smyth complimented Vice-Chair Bond's experience and historical knowledge of the Town, noting its value to the commission.

Chair Smyth made a motion to continue with the current Chair and Vice-Chair. Commission Member Gaetano seconded the motion.

Vote: Aye – 4

Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Ms. Mitchell confirmed the recommendation was approved and would be forwarded to Town Council.

Other Matters

Statement of Conformity Report

Ms. Mitchell referenced packet page 50, explaining that since the Commission did not meet in July, she compiled a more comprehensive report covering the past 90 days. She acknowledged that some items may overlap with previous reports.

The first item discussed was 182 Howard Street. Ms. Mitchell stated that the project was approved and nearing completion, with Ms. Amy Snider as the project manager awaiting a zoning final. Chair Smyth asked about the nature of the work, and Ms. Snider responded that a window unit was being added underneath the stairs.

Ms. Mitchell then addressed the next property, 680 W King Street, which involved roof repairs to fix a leak. She confirmed the project was approved and completed, pending final paperwork.

Regarding 587 W King Street, Ms. Mitchell stated that the project was approved and also pending a zoning final. Ms. Snider added that this was part of renovations to the Horton Hotel 2, specifically the addition of a door downstairs that would match the stucco wall and include a wrought iron handrail.

Ms. Mitchell continued with 595 W King Street, noting that the project involved a gas line installation. Ms. Snider elaborated that the line was painted red to match the bricks and installed within the mortar joints without drilling into the brick. She confirmed the work was completed.

The final item discussed was the Town of Boone Fire Station at 729 W King Street. Ms. Mitchell stated that the roof repair project was approved and has been completed.

Jones House Local Historic Landmark Designation Report

Ms. Mitchell provided an update regarding the Jones House local historic landmark designation report. She stated that she had initially planned to forward the report to Town Council after recently receiving it. However, she explained that she is pausing that step due to comments received during staff-level review. These comments pointed out inconsistencies in the report.

Ms. Mitchell noted that she is currently reaching back out to Ms. Riley Ziegler, author and former Commission member, who has expressed interest in seeing the process through and is willing to assist with revisions. She may bring it back to the Commission for review before resuming the process, depending on the extent of the changes.

She clarified that the next step in the process would have been sending the report to Town Council, followed by submission to the State Historic Preservation Office. Ms. Mitchell emphasized that the project is still in its early stages and that the delay is minor, but she wanted the Commission to be informed that the project remains ongoing.

HPC Work Plan Recap

Ms. Mitchell began by recapping the work plan to review progress since the last meeting in June and to orient new Commission members. She mentioned that most of the information had already been covered during orientation. The commission currently has three ongoing projects: Stoneman's Raid interpretative panel, the Jones House local historic landmark designation report, and Boone Kraut Creek historic marker.

Ms. Mitchell explained that the remaining item on the work plan is the Boone Cemetery survey. She is working to determine what the updated survey process will look like, as significant time has passed since the original documentation. After discussing the matter with Dr. Eric Plaag, the conclusion is that the survey would need to be redone. Although she has the old inventories, she has not yet reviewed them in detail. A GIS component had previously been initiated by Mr. Chris Miller, GIS Coordinator, to help pinpoint grave locations, but Ms. Mitchell noted she has not yet determined how to integrate those pieces effectively.

She then dicussed completing the final CLG (Certified Local Government) credit for the reporting year, which ends in September. Ms. Mitchell proposed that Commission members participate in a training video provided by the Office of State Archaeology. The webinar covers cemetery care, cleanup, documentation, headstone restoration, and repair. Ms. Mitchell shared her availability and emphasized the need to complete the training before the end of September.

Members discussed possible dates, ultimately confirming August 11 at 2:00 PM as the training date.

Ms. Mitchell noted that Commission Member Oxendine was still out of town but would be offered the same training opportunity separately. She reminded members that the webinar link could be sent individually if needed, and that completing a three-question worksheet would then satisfy the CLG requirement.

Ms. Mitchell returned to the work plan recap, noting that aside from the Boone Cemetery survey, the Commission could consider tentatively planning what that project might look like. She then reminded the

Commission of other work plan items, including the Downtown street reports. Ms. Mitchell explained that existing reports are available on the Town website as examples.

Chair Smyth asked for clarification on what "street reports" entailed. Ms. Mitchell responded that these reports explore the history of street names—such as Howard Street—and may include anecdotes or corrections to local lore. She clarified that the reports focus on the streets themselves, not the structures along them. Remaining streets to be researched include King, Queen, Depot, Rivers, Water, and Burrell. Howard, Appalachian, and Junaluska have already been completed.

Ms. Mitchell then introduced the Winklers Creek Dam site as another potential research project. She summarized information she had gathered following the last discussion and to share this information via email to any member interested in pursuing the research. Chair Smyth expressed interest and asked Ms. Mitchell to send him the materials.

Ms. Mitchell mentioned that she had started a Google Doc to compile available resources, references, and research links that could be used for the Commission's projects. She planned to share the document with new members and clarified that it was not intended for storing research findings, but rather as a centralized place to access useful links and references.

Chair Smyth asked whether using a shared Google Doc would conflict with open meeting laws. Ms. Mitchell explained that the document was only for resource sharing and not for collaborative research, which would require more formal coordination. She suggested that if more than one member wanted to work on a project, they could discuss an arrangement during a meeting.

Ms. Mitchell concluded by offering to send reminders before packet postings so members could contribute any relevant materials to upcoming Advisory meetings.

Adjournment

Chair Smyth welcomed both new and returning members and called for a motion to adjourn. Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Gaetano, to adjourn the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
The motion passed.

_____ _____

Vardell Smyth, Chair **Alyson Wuagneux, Board Clerk**