TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
November 4, 2025, 3:00 pm
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

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

Historic Preservation Commission Members Absent: Krystal Carter

Council Liaison Present: Virginia Roseman (joined via WebEx at 3:09 pm)

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Amy Snider-Commercial Zoning Administrator, Jane Shook (via WebEx from 3:00 pm until 3:22 pm), and Brenda Henson-Board Clerk

Others Present: Allison Meade-Town Attorney (via WebEx from 3:00 pm until 3:22 pm)

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 3:07 pm.

Adoption of Agenda

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Oxendine, to adopt the agenda.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Carter)

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Gaetano, to approve the October 7, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission Advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Carter)

The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Town Attorney Discussion on Expert Witnesses/Testimony

Allison Meade, Town Attorney, stated that a previous Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) case requested placing a weather sealant on the exterior brick. She had since spoken with the staff and Dr. Plaag regarding her concern about applicants requesting something different than what was outlined in Appendix D of the UDO or established by the Secretary of Interior's standards. Ms. Meade noted that there were clear rules that weather sealant was not to be applied to brick. However, the applicant argued that the sealant was breathable. Ms. Meade stated that there were no expert witnesses to provide competent evidence that the

breathable sealant would be acceptable. She proposed that the COA application be revised as soon as possible to advise applicants that they would need to have expert witnesses testify at the hearing when deviations from the historic guidelines were requested. Appendix D also needed revisions. Ms. Meade stated that new techniques and products were constantly emerging that might be accepted by the National Park Service (NPS), and an expert witness, such as a preservationist, could provide competent evidence to the Commission.

Ms. Meade emphasized the importance of letting applicants know upfront what the guidelines were if they wanted to propose any deviation. Additionally, the application should be more explicit about resources available to the applicant, such as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or the Secretary of the Interior's standards of the National Park Service.

Chair Smyth agreed with Ms. Meade's suggestions. He asked what credentials were acceptable for an expert witness. Ms. Meade explained that competent evidence in a quasi-judicial setting required someone who could establish what amounted to expert credentials. An expert was something that the Commission had to determine. Ms. Meade noted that someone would present themselves as being qualified as an expert by presenting their credentials. The Commission Chair would decide if the witness would be accepted as an expert. However, the Commission could overrule the Chair if it felt strongly that the witness was not an expert. Ms. Meade stated that the witness could present credentials such as academic training, certification, and experience. She added that an average general contractor would not likely be considered an expert unless they had extensive experience in historic preservation work.

Chair Smyth asked if the HPC could find their own historic expert. Ms. Meade replied that bigger cities likely had historic preservationists on staff or consultants that they could draw from, but the Town of Boone did not. She stated that the HPC would need to rely on staff to do research, contact SHPO, or utilize NPS resources. Ms. Meade added that COA cases might have to be tabled until an expert witness could testify. Vice-Chair Bond noted that in the past, the HPC had relied on local people with historic knowledge. Jessica Mitchell, Advanced Planning Specialist, stated that SHPO might have a reference guide or list of historic preservationists to share with applicants.

Ms. Meade requested that the staff revise the application as soon as possible and send it to her for proofreading.

With nothing further, Ms. Meade left the meeting at 3:22 pm.

Review Boone/Kraut Creek Historic Marker Draft Report

Chair Smyth provided a handout containing Options 1, 2, 3, and 4 for the proposed marker text. Options 1 and 2 were the options shown in the draft report. Options 3 and 4 were modified versions of Options 1 and 2, prepared by Chair Smyth.

Ms. Mitchell provided a recap of the progress from the October 7, 2025, advisory meeting. She suggested to the members that they focus on the marker text and try to format it appropriately by combining the text. Ms. Mitchell asked Commission Member Oxendine for a timeline for the remaining research needed to complete the marker report. Commission Member Oxendine replied that she had a meeting next week in Special Collections (App State library) because her professor had found some canning labels and documents. She felt that she could incorporate any new information from that meeting into the report soon after.

Chair Smyth returned the discussion to the options for the proposed marker text. Commission Member Oxendine preferred Options 2 or 4 because of the numbers and wording contained therein. Ms. Mitchell noted that Option 4 contained the highest word count at 171 words. Members also discussed that Option 4 contained more descriptive information. A discussion ensued regarding modifications to Option 4.

Revisions to Option 4 were discussed with the final version to read:

The North State Canning Company, operating near here from 1923 to 1981, was managed by the Blue Ridge Farmers Association, established through the collective efforts of county agent John B. Steele. 125 local farmers and businessmen contributed to the factory's construction. At its peak, the company produced over 24,000 cases a day and 3,000 tons of kraut products a year. The factory became an essential part of the local economy, the number one kraut producer in the state, and sold throughout the Southeast. Between the pungent smell from production and periodic discharges into Boone Creek, the waterway gained the nickname "Kraut Creek." In 1978, North State Canning Company, under W. F. Miller Jr., sold the company to Nina and Tom Ennis, who merged kraut production with their candy business, Nina-Menz. In 1981, the factory shuttered their doors and stopped producing kraut and candy.

Vice-Chair Bond asked if locating a second sign in Durham Park (App State) had been considered.

Ms. Mitchell noted that there was consensus of the Commission to select Option 4, as revised, for the marker text. She stated that the marker report still needed to be finalized and concluded that this item would return to the Commission when the report was fully drafted.

Other Matters

Ms. Mitchell stated that the Civil War Trails (CWT) had reviewed the Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel text that HPC members discussed at the October 7, 2025, HPC Advisory meeting, and CWT staff only found minor grammatical errors that they would correct. The text was scheduled to be presented to the Town Council for consideration at its meeting next week. Once the Town Council accepted the text, Ms. Mitchell noted that she would contact CWT to initiate the design process, which should take one to two weeks. HPC, Town Council, and the funding partners would approve the design, and fabrication would take approximately one month, with the exception of review time among all partners. Ms. Mitchell felt that it would be early spring when the sign would be installed and an unveiling ceremony could be held. It is possible that the unveiling could be included in the United States' 250th anniversary events in 2026.

Ms. Mitchell announced that a groundbreaking ceremony for the Northern Peaks State Trail at the R.L. Clay (Rivers) House would take place on November 7, 2025, at 4:00 pm, with limited on-site parking and a shuttle service available.

The next HPC meeting will be a quasi-judicial session on Tuesday, November 18, 2025. December meetings will be held on December 2 and December 9, 2025.

Adjournment

Commission Member Oxendine made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Gaetano, to adjourn the meeting at 3:55 pm.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Carter)

The motion passed.

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Vardell Smyth, Chair **Brenda Henson, Board Clerk**