TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
December 2, 2025, 3:00 pm
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

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

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections (via WebEx from 3:00 pm until 3:25 pm), Lane Moody-Downtown Development Coordinator (via WebEx from 3:00 pm until 3:25 pm), and Brenda Henson-Board Clerk

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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 3:01 pm.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Discussion of Murals in the Historic District

Commission members received a handout with mural standards and information from other jurisdictions.

Jessica Mitchell, Advanced Planning Specialist, noted that, due to growing interest from downtown business owners in murals on their buildings, staff approached Town Council for direction on whether the current standards should be updated. Town Council requested input from the Historic Preservation Commission.

Jane Shook, Director of Planning & Inspections, stated that standards for murals in a historic district differ from those in other overlay or zoning districts. She added that, while providing some flexibility, preservation goals still needed to be met. She suggested creating different standards for contributing and non-contributing properties, considering historically and architecturally contributing buildings, in the historic district. Ms. Shook stated that mass, scale, and fenestrations (historic and modified) needed to be considered.

Vice-Chair Bond noted that murals on non-contributing buildings, when executed correctly, could reflect the area's history.

Ms. Shook stated that she and Ms. Mitchell would craft language to present to the HPC for review at their advisory meeting in January or February. She suggested creating a map to mark the architecturally contributing and non-contributing buildings.

Lane Moody, Downtown Development Coordinator, offered her assistance with data collection for the mural standards.

Ms. Shook and Ms. Moody left the meeting at 3:25 pm.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Oxendine, to approve the November 4, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission Advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Review of Boone/Kraut Creek Historic Marker Draft Report

Ms. Mitchell noted that Commission Member Oxendine had made some grammatical changes to the report, and the word count of the proposed marker text in Option 4 changed from 147 to 140 words.

Chair Smyth referred to the first sentence of the draft marker text that 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". He suggested changing the wording because one person would not constitute "collective efforts." Everyone agreed to eliminate the sentence reading, "In 1978, the North State Canning Company, under the leadership of W.F. Miller Jr., was sold to Nina and Tom Ennis, who merged kraut production with their candy business, Nina-Menz". The last two words of the text, "and candy", should also be removed.

Commission members were provided with copies of an article entitled "Mountain Made Kraut: The Rise and Fall of Cabbage in the High Country" that ran in the October 2009 edition of the High Country Magazine. The article contained some information that differed from that in the draft report. After reviewing and discussing the article, members agreed that its validity should be verified. Chair Smyth noted that contact information was on the article and offered to contact the magazine.

Chair Smyth stated that Commission members should work on the following items before the next advisory meeting:

- Verify the validity of information in the article
- Rework the first sentence of the draft marker text to reflect accurate names of parties involved
- Determine why there was a lull between 1925 and 1928
- Determine who was responsible for creating and owning the kraut factory throughout the years, to be contained in the marker report

At the end of the discussion, the proposed marker text for Option 4 read as follows:

> 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 approximately 3,000 tons of kraut products annually. 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 1981, the factory shut its doors and ceased production of kraut.

Members also discussed previously shared research that was distributed in past meeting packets. Ms. Mitchell said she would locate that information to include in the next meeting packet, which would include historic newspaper articles and property deeds.

Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel Draft Design Proof by Civil War Trails Marker Program

Ms. Mitchell directed Commission members to the marker design proof from Civil War Trails (CWT) in the meeting packet. She asked for any suggested changes and noted that neither the funding partners nor the Town Council had seen this proof yet.

Vice-Chair Bond asked what the arrows with wavy lines were. Chair Smyth replied that they indicated the retreat of the Home Guard.

After some discussion, the following changes were suggested:

- Identify arrows with wavy lines as Home Guard retreat
- Move parenthetical identifiers (Wartime) and (Site of today's Post Office) to the inset map
- Identify the red boxes in the inset map as troop fallback locations
- Add College Street identifier to map
- Change Keogh to Union Calvary
- Change Home Guard to Confederate Home Guard

Ms. Mitchell stated she would forward the suggested changes to CWT for revisions.

HPC Work Plan Review for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Ms. Mitchell referred to the annual work plan for HPC contained in the meeting packet. She noted that Staff would hold an annual planning retreat with the Town Council in January, during which the HPC work plan would be discussed. Ms. Mitchell reviewed the work plan. She stated that she would check with Ms. Ziegler regarding the status of the Jones House report. She noted the ongoing items and suggested that the Staff ask for further direction on the Town Council-directed tasks included in the work plan.

Vice-Chair Bond commended Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Shook for their hard work and leadership.

Commission members suggested no changes to the work plan.

Other Matters

Ms. Mitchell noted that CLG reporting was due this month and that she would begin the process to get it submitted before Christmas.

Ms. Mitchell explained that the Statement of Conformity reports would be moved from the advisory meeting agendas to the quasi-judicial meeting agendas.

Beginning in January 2026, paper packets will no longer be furnished to Commission members. Ms. Mitchell asked that everyone with access to a device bring it to the meetings to access the packet material.

Ms. Mitchell provided a friendly reminder to Commission members to let the board clerk know in advance whether they would be attending HPC meetings so a quorum could be ensured.

Vice-Chair Bond reminded everyone of the Jane Austen celebration on December 13, 2025, at the public library, and the showing of Pride and Prejudice at the Appalachian Theatre on December 16, 2025.

Commission Member Gaetano reminded everyone of the book sale this weekend at the public library.

Commission Member Oxendine announced an exhibit at the Jones House on December 6, 2025, entitled "A Seat at Our Table: Community and Appalachian Food Traditions."

Adjournment

Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Oxendine, to adjourn the meeting at 4:54 pm.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

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