TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
August 11, 2026, 3:00 pm
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

Historic Preservation Commission Members Present: Vardell Smyth-Chair and Bennie Gaetano

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Amy Snider-Commercial Zoning Administrator, Lane Moody-Downtown Development Director, Virginia Roseman-Council Member Liaison (via WebEx), and David Pedersen-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, Suite C, and via WebEx to order at 3:00 pm.

Adoption of Agenda

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Chair Smyth, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Vote: Aye – 2
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Chair Smyth, to approve the July 7, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 2
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

HPC Pre-Application Workshop/ Advisory Art Review for Hellbender Mural Expansion at 140 S. Depot Street

Amy Snider introduced Lane Moody and artist Josh Johnston, describing the project as an expansion of the existing hellbender mural onto the western elevation of the structure and pointing the HPC to the proposal in the packet. Lane Moody expressed excitement for the proposal and added that it could mitigate issue with graffiti on the structure. Commission Member Gaetano inquired about remediation if graffiti were to be placed on the mural. Mr. Johnston noted that the original had a clear coat over the mural which would help with the process of cleaning graffiti, which is difficult but possible.

Chair Smyth pointed out that the proposal falls within the new standards and there is no technical reason the HPC would deny the proposal. He added that there were no fenestrations that the mural would impact. The HPC agreed that they were favorable of the mural.

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Chair Smyth, to recommend that the proposal is taken to Town Council for review.

Vote: Aye – 2
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Items for Discussion

The HPC and the others present briefly discussed mural standards and expressed excitement for the possibilities of future murals in the Town.

Council Member Liaison Roseman joined the meeting at 3:06 p.m. and discussed the mural's theme with Mr. Johnston, expressing excitement and interest overall.

Ms. Mitchell inquired and confirmed whether the proposal planned to utilize vapor-permeable paints as described in the recent mural standard updates. Discussion continued, noting areas where previous layers of paint showed spalling. Mr. Johnston confirmed that the acrylic paint to be utilized falls into that category, noting that it is mural-specific and designed to adhere to masonry.

Lane Moody and Josh Johnston left the meeting at 3:11 p.m.

Clawson Burnley Interpretive Panel - Project Discussion

Ms. Mitchell opened this topic by inquiring with the HPC about next steps and offering this time for discussion. Chair Smyth indicated he had not yet begun, but intended to consolidate the information from the Watauga County Historical Society to evaluate and condense the material. Commission Member Gaetano indicated that they had also started consolidating some relevant information, and inquired about an approximate word count. Ms. Mitchell reminded the HPC of word counts from previous panels and determined an approximate count of 250-275 was likely appropriate.

Commission Member Gaetano inquired as to the focus of the narrative for the panel. Ms. Mitchell responded that the goals established by Town Council were to introduce Boone's two female mayors, explain how the park was named after them, and outline their accomplishments. Council Member Liaison Roseman highlighted the importance of their roles as Mayors who are women of significance in the community. Chair Smyth and Commission Member Gaetano agreed that they would work on drafting text and sharing it with Ms. Mitchell.

Jones House Local Historic Landmark Designation Report - Final Revised Report, July 2026 (For Review by HPC - Staff has modified since last presented in August 2024)

Ms. Mitchell introduced this topic by reintroducing the HPC to the landmark designation process and where the report was last left off. She reminded the HPC that they previously recommended sending the report to Town Council, which was unable to occur due to pending edits and further research. She also mentioned some small consistency/grammatical changes Town Staff had made to the report since then, specifically noting the report's language of "additions" vs. "extensions" to the structure. Ms. Mitchell offered the HPC more time with the report if they'd like to revisit it, which the HPC declined. She then outlined a potential timeline for the project if the HPC were to make a recommendation for the report to go before Town Council on August 26, indicating that the process would see the report back in front of the HPC in the Fall after a review by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and to Town Council for a vote near the end of the year, after a Public Hearing this Fall.

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Chair Smyth, to recommend that the report is taken to Town Council for review on August 26, 2026, with the understanding that staff could make minor revisions if issues were identified before that time.

Vote: Aye – 2
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Other Matters

Ms. Mitchell provided a brief update on the Watauga Kraut Factory marker, indicating that after reaching out to Sewah Studios, she was informed that they would likely provide a proof in November of 2026, with possible fabrication of the panel occurring in December of 2026. She also informed the HPC that they would likely wait until after winter for the ground to thaw, to facilitate the installation and unveiling ceremony.

Council Member Liaison Roseman inquired if there was an update from the Town Attorney on an individual interested in an HPC board position. Ms. Mitchell indicated that the Town Attorney did not feel comfortable with their application to this board, since the party in question's spouse works for the Town of Boone in the Planning & Inspections Department and has a direct involvement with the board in that role

Council Member Liaison Roseman inquired with Jae Furman, who was in attendance at the meeting and had expressed interest in the Board, whether he lived inside the Town Limits of Boone. He stated that he did not, and Council Member Liaison Roseman noted that was a requirement to be appointed to this board.

Mr. Furman discussed some preliminary ideas he had for Town projects & community engagement with the HPC, who indicated that he should take them to Town Council as the governing body for the Town of Boone that ultimately passes instruction to the HPC.

Adjournment

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Chair Smyth, to adjourn the meeting at 3:38 pm.

Vote: Aye – 2
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

_____ _____

Vardell Smyth-Chair David Pedersen, Board Clerk