TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 8, 2026, 3:00 pm
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

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

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist and David Pedersen-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, Suite C, and via WebEx to order at 3:06 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Vote: Aye – 2
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Commission Member Howerton)

The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Clawson-Burnley Interpretative Panel Work Session

The HPC began by discussing how to structure the overall draft. Ms. Mitchell suggested a similar format to previous panel drafts, with a report style write-up to accommodate more information and citations in the footnotes, followed by a summary that would act as the panel text. The HPC was favorable to this approach.

Ms. Mitchell noted that she had contacted the Watauga Historical Society regarding the text and their interest in collaborating on the project. The WCHS was favorable of Adelia Daly being the point of contact to represent the WCHS for this panel project. She noted that she had not acquired contact information for Loretta Clawson or the family of Velma Burnley at this time.

The HPC discussed content inclusion and length of the text and decided that small photographs should be included.

Commission Member Howerton arrived at 3:18 p.m.

The HPC informed Commission Member Howerton of their draft content so far.

The HPC discussed content regarding the former Mayors' contributions and backgrounds, and decided to include a section for each individual, and a third section that describes their collaborative achievements.

Ms. Mitchell reminded the HPC of the "Wayside Exhibits" guide published by the National Park Service (NPS), which provides guidance on presenting a variety of outdoor interpretative resources ("Wayside

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Exhibits: A Guide To Developing Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits" available in the P&I library and via the NPS). Commission Member Gaetano mentioned they had also been utilizing the Smithsonian's guidelines for interpretive writing, although it applies more to museums overall.

Commission Member Howerton noted that the NPS "Wayside Exhibits" guide recommends conveyance of key ideas within 45 seconds of reading.

The HPC continued to discuss formatting and content, noting the two former Mayors' dates of public service and their involvement with other organizations.

The HPC formed a list of information gaps that Ms. Mitchell indicated she would attempt to research. These included confirming the overlap in years of service of the former Mayors, their involvement with the NC League of Municipalities, the context of their collaboration on the Greenway, and Loretta Clawson's role with Steep Slope/Viewshed regulations. Ms. Mitchell also indicated she would attempt to find contact information for Loretta Clawson and the family of Velma Burnley.

Chair Smyth discussed next steps with the HPC. They decided they would each work on individual drafts to discuss at the next meeting and discussed communication logistics with Ms. Mitchell to ensure no accidental violations of open meeting laws. The HPC also decided to have an item on the next Advisory agenda to have a work session for the panel, following their other agenda items.

Adjournment

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Howerton, to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 pm.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

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Vardell Smyth-Chair **David Pedersen, Board Clerk**

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