TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
July 7, 2026, 3:00 pm
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

Historic Preservation Commission Members Present: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Bennie Gaetano, and Melody Oxendine (via WebEx)

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Virginia Roseman-Council Member Liaison, 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 2:59 pm.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Chair Smyth, to approve the June 2, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Clawson Burnley Park Interpretive Panel – Project Discussion

Ms. Mitchell opened this topic by directing the HPC to packet page 5, where the Watauga County Historical Society biographies were located. She noted that the HPC had seen these at the June 2, 2026, HPC Advisory meeting, but they were included again for reference.

Ms. Mitchell asked the HPC how they would like to approach working on drafting the panel, providing potential options of independent work outside of meetings, or potential use of meeting time for collaborative work. The HPC decided on independent work outside of HPC meetings using a collaborative cloud-based platform shared with Staff, noting that project updates would take place in meetings. Chair Smyth noted that due to schedule restraints, he would likely begin in early August, with Commission Member Gaetano stating that they also may be able to begin around that time or slightly earlier.

Council Member Liaison Roseman arrived at 3:03 pm.

Ms. Mitchell briefly updated Council Member Liaison Roseman on the discussion so far.

Other Matters

Ms. Mitchell briefly discussed the topic of membership with the HPC, noting that it would be Commission Member Oxendine's last meeting, thanking her for her time and effort. She stated that this left the HPC with

two members, leaving two full-term board member slots and one student member slot available. Ms. Mitchell also stated that two members is the minimum for quorum for holding advisory meetings, but Quasi-Judicial HPC meetings could not hear cases until at least a third member was appointed. She told the HPC that applicants with potential COA cases were being informed of this as well.

Ms. Mitchell stated that she would connect with Laney Wise (Communications for the Town of Boone) about further advertising of HPC board positions.

Chair Smyth inquired about potential members from the Appalachian State University Department of History, and Commission Member Gaetano said they would inquire with contacts there. Chair Smyth also inquired about possible members from the Watauga County Historical Society. Ms. Mitchell replied that she would inquire with them. Council Member Liaison Roseman noting that the requirement that members live in the Town of Boone makes the search more difficult.

Chair Smyth inquired about official requirements for membership on the HPC, and how flexible the verbiage was for applicant requirements. Ms. Mitchell went over some of the language in Article 2.04 of the Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance, that is also from NC General Statutes, Chapter 160D. She noted that on the application, it is an open-ended question for the qualifications section, where applicants can list related experiences to those specific fields listed and Council will take that into consideration.

Ms. Mitchell spoke about upcoming meeting scheduling, providing a suggestion that the August 4, 2026 meeting be canceled and moved to August 11, 2026, in lieu of a Quasi-Judicial Meeting. This would provide extra time for HPC members who are returning from travel at the beginning of the month. She stated that August 11 would additionally provide a chance for a future mural applicant to have a pre-application workshop with the HPC. There was consensus from the HPC to modify the meeting dates.

Ms. Mitchell referenced Article 2 of the UDO, providing information and the application forms for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair. She stated that if the HPC would rather wait for new members, that was an option. The HPC decided to wait for new members before pursuing further action related to Chair and Vice-Chair applications.

Ms. Mitchell reiterated to the HPC that there would be no Quasi-Judicial HPC Meeting in July or August, and noted that cancellation of a future HPC Advisory meeting may be an option if the members need time to work on the panel draft.

She provided a brief update on the fabrication of the Watauga Kraut Factory marker, noting that Sewah Studios had originally quoted a 6-month timeframe for fabrication, but had recently stated it likely would be sooner, so she would keep the HPC informed.

Adjournment

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Chair Smyth, to adjourn the meeting at 3:21 pm.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

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Vardell Smyth-Chair David Pedersen, Board Clerk

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