TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
October 6, 2026, 3:00 pm
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

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

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist (via WebEx), Amy Snider-Zoning Administration Manager, Virginia Roseman-Council Member Liaison (via WebEx), 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 3:00 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Howerton, to approve both the September 1, 2026 and September 8, 2026 Historic Preservation Commission advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Items for Discussion

Jones House Local Historic Landmark Designation Update

Ms. Mitchell noted that the revised report was located in the agenda packet, along with the review letter from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on page 57, SHPO's email correspondence on page 59, and emailed comments form the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology (OSA) on page 61. She noted that associated draft documents were also provided, including a revised map which added the sugar maple trees per SHPO's comments, draft text which addresses the OSA's comments, and a process flow chart for the benefit of the newest HPC members.

Chair Smyth noted that he felt the comments were complimentary in nature and inquired about whether they needed to add text regarding the sugar maple trees. Ms. Mitchell indicated that the inclusion on the revised map addresses the sugar maple trees per SHPO's comments.

Ms. Mitchell indicated to the HPC that this is the final draft of the report, included for reference in the packet, unless they wanted to add language based on the OSA's comments, pointing to packet page 65 which contained

draft language based on those comments. Commission Member Daly agreed that this language was important to include.

Council Member Liaison Roseman noted that in the last Town Council meeting, the safety of the sugar maple trees onsite was discussed thoroughly after some large branches had dropped from them. She indicated that an arborist was going to do a report on the trees, and that she was unsure how long they might still be on site, depending on any safety concerns. She inquired on how or whether the HPC should integrate that into the report. After discussion, the HPC decided to include a statement that the trees were to be evaluated and may have to be removed in the report.

Chair Smyth noted that if the trees did have to be removed, he felt that repurposing the wood locally would be a good idea if possible. Council Member Liaison Roseman noted that the Cultural Resources Advisory Board (CRAB) had discussed the same idea, hoping to have benches or something similar made from the trees that could be placed on site. Commission Member Hall noted that the Thomas Wolfe Memorial House in Asheville, NC had done something similar with trees that were knocked down in Hurricane Helene, making wooden coins that were engraved and sold as souvenirs to help bolster the financial recovery of the property.

Ms. Mitchell reminded the HPC that being in the Historic District, the Jones House is already subject to UDO Appendix D along with being a Town-owned property, and the standards for landmark properties would also apply after its designation as a Local Historic Landmark.

Chair Smyth inquired whether the tree removal would have to come before the HPC if it was decided the appropriate course of action. Ms. Mitchell replied that removal of dead or dangerous trees per documentation from an arborist would be considered maintenance and would not come before the HPC as a Certificate of Appropriateness, but that Staff would keep them informed if that were to happen.

Ms. Mitchell recapped the discussion so far and the edits to the report to include:

- the revision to the site map per SHPO's comments,
- the revision to the report regarding the archaeological statement (presented in the meeting packet) per OSA's comments, and
- adding language to the report about the sugar maple trees possibly being removed in the future and how any tree removal would follow UDO Appendix D standards requiring documentation from a licensed arborist.

She also discussed with the Commission the standards that usually are included to apply to local historic landmark properties. She continued to explain that in the landmark ordinance UDO Article 8 and Appendix D are for the review process for any demolition, alteration, restoration, removal, or rehabilitation. Additionally, guiding standards that apply are the existing district standards as Appendix D and the broadly applied are the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The HPC provided consensus to these standards in the ordinance.

Ms. Mitchell then informed the HPC that they could make a recommendation to bring the revised report before Town Council in a Public Hearing.

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Howerton, to recommend designation of the Jones House property as a local historic landmark and to present the revised Jones House Local Historic Landmark Designation Report to Town Council for consideration at the November 23, 2026, Public Hearing.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Ms. Mitchell noted that this case would be considered a zoning map amendment. Ms. Snider reminded the HPC that their presence would be requested at the Public Hearing on Monday, November 23.

Chair & Vice Chair Application

Chair Smyth opened this topic by announcing the that there was one application for the position of Chair, submitted by himself, and one application for the position of Vice-Chair, submitted by Commission Member Gaetano. He asked if the HPC had any questions or would like to discuss. The HPC was satisfied with the applications.

Commission Member Daly made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Hall, to recommend the applications for consideration by Town Council.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Statement of Conformity Report as of September 29, 2026

Ms. Snider informed the HPC of the one Statement of Conformity item on the report, a now-completed gutter replacement at 681 W King St. She informed the HPC that it was almost a like-for-like replacement, aside from the specific material not being available, but met all required standards.

Chair Smyth inquired if there were any upcoming Quasi-Judicial cases to be aware of. Ms. Snider replied that there was none for October or November currently.

Clawson-Burnley Park Interpretative Panel Work Session

Chair Smyth opened the work session by describing the collaboration process and work so far to the new members of the HPC. Commission Member Howerton confirmed that the goal was a word count of 250-275.

Ms. Mitchell reminded the HPC that by now having 5 members, with the consensus of the full HPC, 2 members could be selected to work on the report collaboratively, therefore not violating open meeting laws. She added that the selected members would bring their work back to the HPC at the next meeting to further refine and collaborate with the rest of the members. Ms. Mitchell also noted that she had contacted Ms. Loretta Clawson, who expressed interest in attending an HPC meeting and was willing to answer some of their questions regarding the panel text. The HPC was favorable to this, and expressed that they felt that having her thoughts directly would be beneficial.

The HPC discussed the verbiage and content of the text, highlighting the importance of Mayor Clawson's and Mayor Burnley's collaboration, their individual roles in Town leadership, and how their impacts are seen in Boone today.

The HPC discussed having 2 members work on the text and bring a draft to the next meeting. Commission Member Howerton and Commission Member Gaetano volunteered to do so.

Chair Smyth made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Daly, to approve Commission Member Howerton and Commission Member Gaetano working on the text collaboratively outside of the HPC meeting.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Commission Member Daly inquired whether a conflict of interest was possible since the text was also to be reviewed by the Watauga County Historical Society, of which she currently serves as the President. Chair Smyth replied that as the Historical Society is not a governmental organization, there should be no issues on the HPC's end, but recommended checking with the Historical Society directly for their thoughts.

Other Matters

Ms. Snider informed the HPC of staffing changes for the Commission and that as part of her new title of Zoning Administration Manager, she would be taking over as the Staff liaison to the HPC from Ms. Mitchell. Ms. Mitchell thanked the HPC for all their work with her and indicated that she would still be available to them, especially during the current transition period. The HPC thanked Ms. Mitchell for all of her work with them.

Adjournment

Commission Member Howerton made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Hall, to adjourn the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

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