

Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

7:00 p.m., April 28, 2022

Microsoft Teams conference meeting

Guests, Commissioners and Staff – Introductions and Sign-in

Guests: Mary Glass, Cindy Lewin, Jill Barker

Commissioners: Phil Klingelhofer, Nat Ames, Colt Gregory, Noreen Hannigan, Steve Sockwell, Kit Norland, Kate Donohue, Caroline Haynes, Bill Browning, Josh Handler, David Howell, Liliana Duica

Staff: Vincent Verweij, Steve Bernheisel

Public comments

Mary Glass mentioned a petition supporting a tree canopy study. Spoke about Civic Federation meeting.

Equity and Tree Canopy Fund discussion – Phil Klingelhofer

Jill Barker asked for support for the Equity and Tree canopy fund discussion.

Conversations occurred about maintenance, understory trees, streamlining the program, concerns about the executive committee role, tracking and technology, and reaching out to apartment buildings.

A motion was placed to support their direction, and seconded. Motion passes.

Notable Trees – John Wingard

Vincent Verweij presented the trees of contention to the committee. 12 trees were approved for Notable Tree status.

Strategic Investment and Stewardship Resourcing for Arlington's Natural Capital Paper – Phil Klingelhofer

After a short discussed, a motion was presented to support the letter. The motion passed.

Soil Profile rebuilding – Vincent Verweij

Vincent Verweij presented on Soil Profile rebuilding.

Clarifying questions were asked about where it is applied, carbon capture and climate change, how long it took to implement the change, tracking the benefits, and providing outreach on its value.

Commission Infrastructure (Work Plan, Annual Report, Memberships)

Staff Reports:

Vincent mentioned Barcroft Apartments, Met Park, Alcova Heights, maintenance Statistics, Arbor Day, and the VDOT permit for planting trees along their rights-of-way.

Maintenance:

- Preventive pruning in Fairlington is still in progress. with Batches, 5th and 6th completed and currently working on the 7th batch. An average of 120 trees were pruned. Preventative pruning has started in Ballston Park, with about 43 trees total scheduled or completed.
- We received 37 new requests for tree maintenance in April, and closed 49. We are still working on a backlog of 214 outstanding requests. See the below bar graphs for the year so far.

Planning:

(Projects with high impact or high opportunity highlighted in **bold**)

45 new plans were submitted in April for review. See the below bar graph for the year so far.

Long-term planning

- Staff review the **Langston Blvd** plan for its goals in tree canopy expansion and biophilic design.
- Forestry and Natural Resources staff attended a meeting on the development of Barcroft Apartments, which has significant tree canopy and some unusual natural resources on the site. Staff helped direct the project to try to avoid impacting those resources. You can learn more about the project here: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Housing/Development/Barcroft-Apartments>

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

- In Review
 - **716 Glebe Road** (Sunrise South Glebe Road) concept plan was reviewed. One concern for the review process is to preserve a mature Oak located on the southern part of the property. The site is adjacent to Alcova Historic Site and next to a notable tree location.
 - Planning continues for UCMUD multi-family housing project on Shirlington road which is nearing completion for firm site conditions requirements.
 - An existing repair shop on Shirlington Road is applying for a site plan revision, but it is not clear whether they were previously in compliance. Staff is working with zoning to clarify site plan conditions.
- Approved/Under construction
 - Review of **Substation expansion at 1720 South Fern Street**. The plans will be amended to show the correct tree replacement calculation for all removals. The missing trees must be reflected in the plans either as planting onsite or tree fund payments.

- **Ames Center Redevelopment** comments have been addressed by the developer and the CEP plans have been approved by DPR.
- Preconstruction at **2117 Crystal Drive** took place. This area functions as a public park but is privately owned. A portion of the land will be converted into a restaurant resulting in tree removals. Tree removals have already been approved along with tree protection controls.
- Inspections of tree planting at **Metropolitan Park 6/7/8** are starting. This project is moving very quickly.

DES

- The ART Bus Project is under review, with CEP drawings coming up for a second review. Much of this site is within an RPA but is mostly covered by parking and invasive species currently. Part of the site will be heavily planted with native tree species and seed mix to satisfy tree replacement and stabilization requirements.
- The Shirlington Road Pedestrian Bridge project is under review for LDA. Staff is considering how to save some large trees in the channel and to ensure replacement trees are planned.
- Staff worked with DES engineering staff to inventory trees along route 50 that are in the path of a water main upgrade. DES will directional bore the new pipe to avoid these trees but will need monitoring pits.
- Preconstruction has taken place for Ballston Pond and all spring trees will have been planted this week with inspections happening next week.
- Preconstruction has taken place for Donaldson Run reach B with planting expected to run through mid-June. The contractor will be watering per their contract.
- The replacement of West Glebe Road bridge has begun. All protected trees are on the Alexandria side.
- Two additional reaches of Donaldson Run are under review.
- A large culvert replacement project and watermain replacement project on N Dumbarton street is still being reviewed due to revisions to reduce tree impact.

Parks

- Preconstruction took place at **Alcova Heights Park** for upgrades with the contractor. Another preconstruction on tree conservation will be scheduled to do a detailed walkthrough with the landscaper and certified arborist. This project involves tree protection, tree removals, new plantings, and has a reforestation component.
- **Jennie Dean Park** site completion inspection took place. Two tree species have not been planted including the Hickories and Dogwood. One potential Hackberry will need to be replaced due to poor condition.
- The **New Park** (Cottonwood Park) Core Team's 90% Site plan for the New Cottonwood Park took place. Most comments have been resolved, and final suggestions are being discussed. The DES portion of this is being reviewed in tandem with the park project so that the appearance will be seamless.
- First trees were installed at the **Metropolitan Park** in Pentagon City. In total 29 trees were delivered, and trees will continue to be planted throughout the season until the project is completed.

- **John Robinson Park** received the final trees that arrived and were approved based PNR standards. Trees that have been planted by previous deliveries are also in excellent condition. One last final inspection will be conducted between DES and Forestry.

By-right projects

- A new leasing office is being built in Park Shirlington. It requires revisions in order for the tree canopy requirement to be satisfied.
- Staff are seeing the first projects under the LDA2.0 requirements starting to get built. We anticipate the first soil profile rebuilding inspections to occur in less than 6 months.

Schools

- No new projects

Federal

- No new projects

Tree Planting:

- A volunteer tree planting was undertaken at **Fort Scott Park**. 37 native trees were planted on 9 April in a recently cleared section of the upper park near the ball field.
- Arbor Day at **Taylor Elementary School** saw a native dogwood and a scarlet oak planted on school grounds with the help of students and teachers. Arlington County received another Tree City award from the Arbor Day Foundation.
- 2 Commemorative Trees were planted in AC parks this season. A dogwood in **McCoy Park** and a persimmon in **Tuckahoe Park**.
- All street trees in both northern quadrants are marked for planting, the contractor is busy checking for underground utilities and expected to start planting next week.
- Tree watering lists have been created and the watering team has been busy installing watering bags and establishing efficient routes using new software.
- A permit application is moving along for **planting along VDOT rights-of-way**, and we anticipate being able to start planting in these spaces in Fall 2022

Outreach and volunteering:

- Volunteers again stepped up and repotted the remaining 60 native trees purchased earlier this spring. We now have an irrigated native tree nursery and are actively looking for a location for our next volunteer planting event this fall.

Personnel:

- Tree maintenance staff is training other Parks and Natural Resources staff on Chainsaw safety, to minimize the risk of injury from tree work in our parks, and during emergencies.
- The tree crew is finalizing paperwork to hire the final vacancy in the forestry unit, the tree maintenance worker. We anticipate them to get on board in the next two months.

Other:

- A new permitting system is getting implemented in mid-2023, which will hopefully improve coordination between development projects and staff.

Commission Member Reports (**Taken in order of Action Items first**)

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Jason Papacosma, Watershed Programs Manager, DES Office of Sustainability and Environment Management, provided informative updates on a range of topics including: 1) stream restoration best practices; 2) updates to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Plan; 3) implementation of a Stormwater Utility Fee, and; 4) updates to land disturbing activities, LDA 2.0.

We continue to wait for the first public draft of the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan, which should be available for review and comment in the next month or so.

Park and Recreation Commission (Colt Gregory)

The April meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission approved a supplemental Advisory Letter on the Clarendon Sector Plan Update – 10th Street Park. Lack of adequate space park as called for in the 2006 Sector Plan continues to be an issue. PRC also spoke before the County Board regarding environmental equity and the plan's lack of adequate park space. Public Comment was received in support of space for the 10th Street Park.

PRC received presentations on Stormwater Management and Planning by Jason Papacosma (DES) and Aaron Wohler (DPR). Major efforts planned include 80 drainage acres for Sparrow Pond and 300 drainages acres at Ballston Pond.

DPR provided the initial discussion required for PRC to begin official naming for New Park at South Eads and Army Navy Drive.

Public Spaces Master Plan Implementation Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

The PSMP-IAC met on March 31 and reviewed progress to date on a wide range of PSMP recommendations including: 1) athletic field availability and a utilization; 2) inventory and level of service of casual use spaces; 3) update of the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan; 4) SA-3 zoning ordinance study, and 5) field lighting. The committee will continue to meet on an as needed basis as staff continues to work through the PSMP recommendations.

Planning Activities/SPRC (Steve Sockwell and Caroline Haynes)

Caroline Haynes:

Most of you probably already saw that on Saturday, April 23 the County Board unanimously adopted the PenPlace SPRC (phase 2 of the Amazon HQ2).

Langston Highway (Caroline Haynes)

Staff continues to roll out key planning elements, requesting public feedback along the way. The Key Planning Elements are:

Land Use
Economic Vitality
Housing
Building Form
Transportation, Connectivity, and Urban Design
Public Schools, Facilities, and Spaces
Historic and Cultural Resources
Sustainability and Resilience

Tree Stewards (Noreen Hannigan)

Tree Stewards held its 2022 Class Graduation Party and Membership Meeting at the picnic pavilion of Lacey Woods Park. Graduates received their official t-shirts and were enthused to become full-fledged members. In addition, Tree Stewards have been organizing April tree plantings in Fort Scott Park and Ben Brenman Park (in Alexandria), and will be staffing an information table at the upcoming Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale on April 30.

Arlington Regional Master Naturalists

No report

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

Applications are being accepted for trees to be planted this fall; the application period will run until June 24. We are offering the same species as last year.

Carpinus caroliniana -- American Hornbeam
Quercus palustris -- Pin Oak
Betula nigra -- River Birch
Celtis occidentalis -- Sugarberry
Platanus occidentalis -- American Sycamore
Quercus bicolor -- Swamp White Oak
Tilia americana -- American Linden

The online application and details of the program are available on the [Tree Canopy Fund page](#) of the EcoAction Arlington website.

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) met on Monday, April 4. Agenda items included announcements on the "South George Mason Drive Multimodal Study Kickoff" and the County's new list of Repaving/Marking projects. The main guest on the agenda was Dennis Leach, Arlington County Director of Transportation, who answered questions about his department's plans and priorities for integrating bike transportation into the county's overall system. Questions for Mr. Leach had been submitted in advance. He was well received. Another guest was Ann Gordon Mickel from Dominion Energy, who spoke about the company's

upcoming 3-year-long "Glebe Electric Transmission Project" (substation re-design) along lower Four Mile Run at Potomac Yards. The BAC is interested in the project because the W&OD bike trail will be detoured during the construction, so Ms. Mickel illustrated the proposed detour routes and discussed the timelines. The construction will take place on both the Arlington and Alexandria sides of Four Mile Run and will involve decommissioning several large above-ground power poles currently on concrete piers in the middle of the stream and then drilling under the stream to run those power lines from the existing Glebe Substation to a new "transition station" in Potomac Yard. More information can be found at the website below. Note there is a Community Meeting scheduled for May 11.

<https://www.dominionenergy.com/projects-and-facilities/electric-projects/power-line-projects/glebe>

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Vacant)

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (Phil Klingelhofer)

No report

Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission (Shawn Norton)

No report

Virginia Department of Forestry (Jim McGlone)

No report

Arlington Public Schools (Jim Meikle)

No report

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Kirsten Ann Conrad)

No report

New Business

Commissioner Handler mentioned invasive removals at Upton Hill. Asked about whether the Commission should do an inquiry. Chair Klingelhofer offered to reach out to NOVA Parks.

Commissioner Norland spoke about the Civic Federation tree collaborative.

Next meeting: May 26, 2022