
**MEETING MINUTES OF THE HYBRID
ARLINGTON COUNTY FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

6/26/25

The **FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION** convened its meeting at **7:02 PM** on 6/26/25.

PRESENT (IN-PERSON) Caroline Haynes, David Howell, Noreen Hannigan, Josh Handler, Steve Sockwell, John Carey, Jenn Hazen, Bob Benson

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY) Bill Browning, Phil Klingelhofer, Lisa Marcellus, Nia Bagley

ABSENT Elizabeth Gearin, Neal Hunter

STAFF Vincent Verweij (DPR), John Marlin (DPR)

MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES

Introductions

Public comments

Jeanette Smith spoke about the deer survey, in opposition to sharpshooting, and recommended against the program, and asked to go with non-lethal solutions.

Dr. Bernie Berne spoke about the Ballston One site plan, and asked for the commission to reject the site plan, or require site plan conditions to have biophilic components and reduce light pollution. Dr. Berne asked for wider tree planting areas, instead of creating separate bike lanes, and to add *Asclepias syriaca* to the planting plan.

Deer Survey – John Marlin

John Marlin presented on the new deer survey.

Discussion followed about:

- Caroline Haynes asked about numbers of deer for Four Mile Run - They were provided in the presentation.
- Noreen Hannigan: Why are the numbers lower? - Likely natural fluctuation. Diseases or measurement error are unlikely.
- Josh Handler: Could the area be too overbrowsed, and less food is available? - It is possible
- Caroline Haynes: Deer and vehicle collisions? - Reporting is inaccurate. Speeds are low, and unlikely to be reported.
- Bill Browning: Has the AWLA provided data for retrieval rate of deer carcasses? - Has not been asked for.
- Caroline Haynes: What is the timeline? - Targeting July for exclosures. Browse survey data in the Fall. Fall would be a good time to follow up.

- Bill Browning and Caroline Haynes: vegetation is low right now, how valuable is a browse survey? - This will help set baselines, hopefully seeing improvement over time.
- John Carey: Mentioned a study in Germany speaking about aerial surveys that may be undercounts from the real population. Caroline Haynes asked to share the study.
- Noreen Hannigan: What month was the survey done? - Third week of March. Preferred earlier.

Tree protection during development – Vincent Verweij

Vincent Verweij presented on tree protection during development

Discussion followed on:

- Impact and tolerance
- Specimen trees
- Surveying owners with tree impact
- Encouragement of staff protecting more trees
- Moving trees up in the LDA page
- Neighbor tree impact
- Forcing developers to have good faith conversations with neighbors
- Writing a follow-up letter about the white paper
- The Tree Stewards survey to look at Tree Canopy Fund tree survival.

Vincent will share statistics on tree impact and planting from development projects.

Comprehensive Planning Update – David Howell

Caroline Haynes gave context about a meeting about the misunderstanding about the definition of natural resources, and David Howell picked up the discussion about context of the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan in the Comprehensive plan. The plan is to connect all the plans together.

Jenn Hazen asked what the confusion was. David spoke about the misunderstanding of what Natural Resources means (as it could mean oil and gas) and spoke about how the planning document could serve as an education document for those who do not understand natural resources in the context of Arlington.

Josh Handler asked about timing for input and asked for a presentation on the project for the Commission to head off concerns about reducing the value of natural resources and increasing density.

Bob Benson spoke about concerns from the housing advocates asking for more density. Bob also asked for a presentation for the commission.

David Howell spoke about next meetings and presentations.

Planning Letters

Ballston One: 4601 Fairfax Dr – The commission discussed the letter previously shared. Steve Sockwell suggested adding additional landscaping, dark sky lighting, pollinator-friendly plants, bird-friendly glass.

A letter with these edits was approved unanimously.

Caroline Haynes asked for more volunteers on planning processes.

May minutes

Noreen Hannigan provided technical edits.

The minutes were approved unanimously with those edits.

Staff Reports

Staff spoke about Tree-of-heaven removal, circuit tree maintenance, stormwater tree planting, and storm response

Forestry:

Maintenance:

- Staff responded to a major storm on 6/19/25, and worked overtime through the weekend
- Circuit Maintenance – the Tree Crew is finishing up Columbia Heights. Staff are inventorying Ashton Heights, and monitoring completion of the remaining work.
- Staff created a work order to better organize the tree removals and help mitigate the spread of tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)
- Staff met to research ownership and maintenance responsibility of trees in Crystal City
- The tree maintenance contract ends in November, 2025. Staff is working on updating contract language for a request for proposals.

Planning:

Long-term planning

- Forestry staff is assisting on the project plan for the Low Residential Study.
- Staff are working on identifying trees missing from the site plan conditions so they can be replaced in accordance with the specified requirements.

Special Exception projects (site plans, use permits)

- In review:
 - Staff reviewed the application for 4500 Langston Blvd (SPLN25-00005). The permit was rejected as it claimed canopy credit for trees that were being removed onsite. The site also must improve its overall landscape plans, including adding sufficient street trees throughout the site.
 - Staff joined the planning to discuss the open comments on the Ballston One (4601 Fairfax Drive). Better details of the location of the garage should be provided by the applicant. Due to site restrictions, the applicant can plant trees off site to meet MWCOG targets.
 - 1722 N Glebe Rd is being proposed for redevelopment. This is a wooded site covered in non-native trees and invasive vines. Staff is working to find the highest value natural resources on site for conservation and targeting a 50% tree canopy goal.

- Staff are assisting applicants for Adaptive Reuse projects, which are aiming to reuse existing office buildings for other uses, such as residential and hotel. Staff is working to ensure these projects do not inadvertently damage public trees, or significantly change approved landscape plans.
- Staff reviewed the site plan at 2601 Columbia Pike (FBCN25-00004). The permit was rejected because no street trees were proposed, and the required 10% canopy coverage was being met using offsite trees.
- Staff is working with the use permit for the entire Barcroft site, to clarify where and how tree canopy is counted
- Approved
 - Reviews for Barcroft apartment renovations are continuing. Due to complications with lighting installation causing damage to existing trees, review has taken longer than expected.

DES

- Staff approved the permit for a large roadway project on Wilson Boulevard. This project will provide soil volume for all replacement trees in new spaces trees and increase soil volume for the replacement of two others that Urban Forestry requested to be removed due to condition of the roots and trunks.
- Staff expects to approve tree protection for The Bartlett on 12th St S. and 13th St S after signs are hung. This project may end up requiring removal of street trees due to repairs of an unknown condition that is causing failure of the sidewalk and of the roadway in one location on 13th st. Owners, JBG, have agreed in their permit to work closely with Urban Forestry to restore the project per site plan conditions and per approved plans. This project shares space with the 12th street Transitway extension.
- Staff discussed planting trees on APS properties for replacement of projects that cannot fit them on site.
- Tree planting is being completed on the section of Columbia Pike adjacent to the Arlington National Cemetery

Parks

- Staff reviewed the 30% design plans for the Kenmore field conversion. Improved tree preservation information is required.
- Staff met at the preconstruction meeting for Woodstock Park. The contractor was not onsite, and another site visit is required to ensure the site is staked and tree preservation controls are installed.

Tree Planting:

- Staff are continuing to find locations for Fall 2025 planting and closing out planting requests.
- Staff are continuing to confirm planting installations and inspections.
- Staff conducted a site visit with a park manager for potential planting locations.
- The management intern assisting forestry staff finalized the list for planting in tree equity areas, with stormwater fund funding. 115 additional trees will be planted this year with that project.
- The planting season was wrapped up in early June, with a short extension.
- Several trees were moved in Douglas Park, due to an active Dominion Energy project. These trees will be planted in the Fall.

Outreach/volunteering:

- Tree Steward volunteers have completed review of planted trees from past years. Survival of newly planted public trees appears to be higher for this survey.

Natural Resources:

Deer survey: After completing a deer population drone survey in March 2025, staff are preparing to implement two forms of herbivory impact assessment this summer and fall while procuring contractors for potential professional sharpshooting operations in early 2026.

Invasives: Rains (and now heat) have slowed work on invasives but we continue to make progress. Only thing to note would be that currently the contractor is treating invasives both in Jamestown Park and on Jamestown APS property, as a result of work this last year to better collaborate on natural land management.

Emerald Ash Borer – Staff have set out Yellow Pan Traps (YPTs) at the two sites we’ve released Oobius wasps the last two years, to see if we can detect signs they’ve established themselves. Volunteers will help collect and sort samples.

Spotted Lanterfly – Populations are increasing and folks are noticing. County created a web page with info and links to more resources. Natural Resources has treated several Tree-of-heaven (TOH) and TOH groves around the county, and is working with Forestry to have dead trees removed where necessary, and native trees planted to replace TOH.

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

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

No update

Park and Recreation Commission (Neal Hunter)

No update

Public Spaces Master Plan Implementation Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

No update

Planning Activities/SPRC (Steve Sockwell, Caroline Haynes, David Howell, Bob Benson)

No update

Parks Review Subcommittee (David Howell)

No update

Public Facilities Review Commission (Vacant)

No update

Tree Stewards (Noreen Hannigan)

Tree Stewards of Arlington and Alexandria (TSAA) have been assisting EcoAction Arlington with the Tree Planting Program and the Tree Canopy Equity Program by making home visits to advise homeowners on

species selection and placement. (Note: With the change in the source of funding, it's no longer being called the Tree Canopy Fund.) The deadline for applications was June 23rd. No word yet on how many applications were received. There is now more emphasis on plantings for the low-canopy areas of Arlington. Applicants in those neighborhoods were given more choices, which included small trees and shrubs. Applicants in the higher-canopy neighborhoods were offered large and medium trees.

Some Tree Stewards are also participating with the Tree Canopy Fund Subcommittee. (See separate report on that.)

Work is ongoing by a team of Tree Stewards to collect and integrate data on the survival and condition of Tree Canopy Fund trees that have been planted since the inception of the program.

Tree Stewards have been conducting habitat-improvement work in Grandma's Creek, Fort Scott Park, and Dominion Hills by Four Mile Run. The recent spell of daily rain storms forced the cancellations of some other events.

And Tree Stewards are looking forward to an upcoming continuing-education Tree Walk with Vincent Verweij at the end of June.

Tree Canopy Fund (Noreen Hannigan)

The Tree Canopy Fund Committee met in person on June 18, 2025, with Kate Donohue chairing. The Committee has identified numerous topics that need to be explored and evaluated before recommendations can be advanced. Per agreement between Kate and Caroline Haynes (Forestry and Natural Resources Commission (FNRC) Chair), the committee's task will be to come up with topics that need to be addressed and offer short papers outlining the opportunities and/or challenges posed by each. These will be presented to the FNRC for discussion at the end of the summer.

The next meeting will be held July 22.

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) met on Monday, June 2, 2025.

Mr. David Moskovitz, a Shared-Mobility Specialist with MetroBike (a contractor to Arlington County), briefed the Committee on recent upgrades to micromobility devices (scooters) operating in the County. After general discussion, representatives from Lime, Bird, and Spin spoke about their companies' products and answered questions about their operations.

Mr. Mike Hanna, BAC member and representative to the Transportation Master Plan committee, updated the BAC on the status of the Master Plan development.

Mr. Elwyn Gonzalez, DES Transportation Master Planner and County staff liaison to the BAC, talked about the member-appointment process. Members of the public who regularly attend BAC meetings were encouraged to apply for BAC membership. There was also discussion about how to increase diversity on the BAC. Mr. Gonzalez was in the process of drafting appointment letters to provide the County Manager.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Vincent Verweij)

The next roundtable will be held on July 31.

Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee (Phil Klingelhofer)

No report

Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission (Lisa Marcellus)

Focused on biophilia, energy projects, gas-powered leaf blower ban.

Virginia Department of Forestry (Jacob Zielinski)

No report

Arlington Public Schools (Steven Bernheisel)

Mentioned Grace Hopper/Career Center and smaller renovation projects, including Drew Elementary and Ashlawn. Mentioned watering help for orchard.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Vacant)

No report

New Business

Bob Benson asked to ask about the school white paper, along with the county white paper.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 PM.