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

12/15/22

The **FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION** convened its meeting at **TIME** on **12/15/2022**.

<b>PRESENT (IN-PERSON)</b>	N/A, virtual meeting
<b>PRESENT (VIRTUALLY)</b>	Phil Klingelhofer, Colt Gregory, David Howell, John Carey, Josh Handler, Kit Norland, Nat Ames, Noreen Hannigan, Caroline Haynes, Steve Sockwell, Kate Donohue, Melody Mobley
<b>ABSENT</b>	Bill Browning
<b>STAFF</b>	Vincent Verweij, Krista Abele, Aileen Winqvist, Steve Bernheisel (APS)
<b>GUESTS</b>	Mike Nardolilli, Paul Gilbert, Brian Nolan, Mary Glass, Bernard Berne, Anne Bodine, Susan Land

**MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES**

*Public Comment*

Bernie Berne commented on the EA for Mt. Vernon trail. Suggest commenting on the EA to reduce tree impact and improve pollinator habitat.

Anne Bodine recommended going to Arlingtonians for a Clean Future page on Missing Middle. Spoke about planning commission. Recommended action on Missing middle.

Mary Glass shared independent tree canopy study.

Susan Land presented on Missing Middle Housing study calculations.

*Stormwater Utility Program*

Aileen Winqvist presented on the stormwater utility program.

Questions about which trees count, lot coverage, choice of tiers over specific measurements, frequency of impervious survey, commercial projects, impact on houses of worship, phasing, incentive program creativity, impact on people of color, fairness, and conserving existing mature trees.

Commissioner Handler suggested a letter improving incentives for January. Commissioner Carey volunteered to write a letter.

## *NOVA Parks*

Paul Gilbert spoke about NOVA parks and strategic plan.

Questions included: Invasive plant removal at Potomac Overlook, electrification. Note of appreciation for joining nature walk focused on POC. Material use (gravel instead of asphalt), using native plants, and pollinator attractors throughout parks. Paul will share list of native plants used in Falls Church. Tree reporting, nutrient banks. VDOF invasive species program. Leaf blower use reduction. W&OD Visitor's Center.

Commissioner Handler suggested a letter commending on steps they have taken, prioritizing electrification. Find meadow areas, and improve them. A discussion followed on how to frame the letter. Congratulatory vs. a combination with recommendation. Commissioners Hannigan and Mobley will draft the letter.

## *2022 Year end Report and 2023 Action Plan*

Language changes were suggested. All voted yes, except Commissioner Haynes, who abstained. Commissioner Browning was not present.

## *Chesapeake Bay Preservation Plan Letter*

Commissioner Haynes described how the letter was drafted. There was a unanimous vote yes for the letter. Commissioner Browning was not present.

## *November Minutes and Commission Infrastructure*

Poll for virtual meeting and locations. The poll showed preference for Bozman location.

Preference for February and December meetings be virtually.

The minutes were approved unanimously, with a technical change from "No Report" to "No meeting was held" for meetings not held, instead of missing reporting.

## *Staff Reports*

Vincent Verweij focused on FNRC Site plan meeting, Pen Place, Electric equipment, Route 50 trees, Boat House, 2700 S Nelson, Specimen trees

## **Maintenance:**

- Staff continue working with metal tree grates at 3033 Wilson Blvd and coordinating their removal with our Welder.
- The fourth batch of preventive maintenance in Fairlington has been completed, and staff continues to inventory trees at the Fairlington Neighborhood. (S Taylor St and S 36th St S)
- One new batch of preventive pruning is scheduled for this month. Batch 6th has approximately 47 trees to be pruned.
- Staff will be starting the inventory of the Arlington Heights neighborhood near S Ivy St at the end of December. There are very large trees in this neighborhood.

- Tree maintenance requests are getting close to 100 open requests. This is down from 300+ requests in the summer.

### **Planning:**

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

#### Long-term planning

- Staff is working with planning on a W & OD connection at East Falls Church Park and on a continuous multi-use trail along route 50 from George Mason Drive to the Thomas Jefferson Pedestrian Bridge.

#### Site plans (special exception and by-right)

- In review:
  - Discussion with county planners on the St. Charles Church Concept plans. Significant information about street trees and canopy was lacking.
  - Meeting with the developer from the project Sunrise Senior Living on S Glebe Rd (not to be confused with the one on N Glebe Rd). The applicant was exploring the viable options for tree conservation of the large Oak on site. The applicant did not provide any solutions and more tree conservation efforts should be allocated to this tree.
  - Discussion round 3 of the Form Based Code project at 3401 Columbia Pike. The largest site conflict is allocating sufficient street trees and making space for a Bus shelter.
  - Staff reviewed an initial site plan for the Inn at Rosslyn. This plan can't adequately meet street tree requirements due to parking and balcony overhangs conflicting with street tree space. The plan also did not show how they could meet canopy requirements.
- Approved:
  - Forester inspected the trees planted on the site plan at 850 N Randolph St as part of the final certificate of occupancy. All the 8 trees that were accepted include American Elms, Black Gums, and Willow oaks.
  - The forestry plan review team discussed the comments for the Pen Place project at 1080 S Eads St. This project included the landscape plans for the proposed HQ2 Helix building, and multiple comments about the proposed landscaping were added such as tree size, spacing, design standard and location for street trees. Staff asked for changes in the irrigation plans as well. Civil plans were also reviewed with some comments not addressed regarding decorative lighting, and with utility conflicts with proposed planting at the proposed park at S Eads.
  - Forester joined the preconstruction at 1103 N Vermont St. This is project requires tree protection as there are 3 larger oaks on the ROW and one shared tree. The site has an extensive landscape plan and plant material will be inspected before installation.

### DES

- The S Eads Street multi-modal plan set, phase II is nearing completion, with staff working closely with engineers to retain mature street trees in the right-of-way opposite the Pen Place development site.
- The Alta Crossroad CEP project came through for a second review. This project cuts through the new west-end sculpture plaza on Columbia Pike for a sanitary line upgrade required for a project in Fairfax County. This project will remove some newly planted trees and may impact or remove some large established trees on private land as the project evolves.
- Staff reviewed the N Quebec Street outfall project which is an emergency repair. This project will impact many trees on land owned by the county board, including some large trees, although

the impact is unavoidable due to the very severe erosion. This is in an RPA and there will be replanting.

- Staff is working on two missing sidewalk projects, one at S Irving St and one at N Monroe ST, which will impact numerous private trees. UF is working closely with DES to reduce the impact to those trees.
- For most of the numerous intersection and bus stop projects that staff reviews, the focus is to save one, two, or five trees on public or private land. The design process within DES is advancing to recognize these challenges, which allows Urban Forestry to be more proactive.
- Staff has been working with DES construction on projects which do not have plan sets, to limit tree impact.

### Parks

- The Urban forester visited the plant nursery Brandy Growers to select the most adequate plant species for reforestation at Alcova Heights Park. Urban forestry has visited the nursery twice and has assisted the landscaper to arrange the appropriate plant material to its designated area.
- Urban forester joined the site for the proposed Arlington Boat house adjacent to Gateway Park. This meeting's purpose was to determine the impact this facility will have on trees and the existing trail infrastructure.
- Staff joined a discussion about the 2700 S Nelson St site plant. The site will be demolished and will become a public space for art and Music. Zoning regulations still apply, and the renderings were missing canopy cover and streetscape requirements. Staff is working to find appropriate places with sufficient soil volume on site.
- Staff met at the Gunston Bubble project. The meeting's purpose was to discuss the proposed electrical line installed by Dominion. Forestry is pushing for the whole Utility to be tunneled 3 feet under the ground to reduce the impact on the existing canopy.
- Discussion with the county park planners about the Upper Bluemont Park renovations. An update was provided with an internal open discussion taking place. This project will conserve all native trees within the project, only nonnative trees will be removed around the parking look and is proposed to contain a reforestation component.
- Staff joined the landscaping contractor at Alcova Heights for the installation of 13 red maples, 13 tulip trees, and about 43 magnolia trees. These trees were installed in the reforestation area. Staff met at the plant nursery Brandy Growers to select the most adequate plant species for reforestation at Alcova Heights. Most of the trees and bulbs were selected but the grower was missing 4 tree species that will be procured in the next following weeks.

### By-right projects

- 856 N Madison St preconstruction for the initial phase of the 9 single-family homes that will develop adjacent to the Dominion Hills site plan. No on-site trees are to be preserved but the site requires SPR (Soil Profile Rebuilding) and tree planting to meet the canopy cover requirement.

### Schools

- Staff discussed phasing of the work proposed at the Career Center, which may impact some trees around the playground, to prepare the site. Replacement will be required for the larger project.

### Federal

- No new projects or updates

### **Tree Planting:**

- Tree planting is currently in full swing
- Both SE and SW quadrants are completely planted except for 3 missing trees that are being sourced by the contractor. The NE quadrant is currently being planted with our biggest section being 57 trees in the planting strip on the north side of Arlington Blvd. east of Fillmore Ave. 73 trees were also planted in the median along the same stretch of Arlington Blvd.
- 256 trees are in the ground with an accompanying photograph and installation date in their file.

### **Outreach:**

- Staff will add one additional structural pruner test week to the original cohort, for a total of 10 trained structural pruners. The person added is a professional and so limited training was necessary. Tree Stewards are discussing plans for another structural pruning cohort training in spring .

### **Personnel:**

- Forestry staff will be assisting in snow clearing this winter.

### **Other:**

- After a review of the current Specimen tree inventory, 2 trees were found to be removed. Forestry reached out to the owners, and they provided evidence the trees had died, and they have been removed from the register. You can see the current register here:  
<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Sustainability-and-Environment/Trees/Support-Trees/Specimen-Trees>
- New Specimen tree applications were inventoried.
- Tree maintenance bucket trucks are getting electric chargers for electric battery equipment installed, as part of our Parks equipment electrification program.

### *Commission Member Reports*

#### Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Did not meet

#### Park and Recreation Commission (Colt Gregory)

The December Park and Recreation Commission Meeting (Virtual) began with an organizational overview of the DPR by Director Jane Rudolph.

The next presentation addressing the NOVA Parks Strategic Plan was presented by Executive Director of NOVA Parks, Paul Gilbert and NOVA Board Member Paul Ferguson. NOVA Parks was able to add 200 acres last year, including the nearby 45 acre Winkler Botanical Preserve in Alexandria. (Note: Wild Turkeys can be seen here in the fall). Mr. Gilbert pointed favorably to Arlington /NOVA working in volunteer partnership to support Upton Hill and Potomac Overlook invasive plant removal. Discussion also centered on a Strategic Plan component involving the redesign and expansion of the W&OD through Arlington to improve bike/pedestrian safety.

The meeting concluded with the Commission approving the meeting schedule for 2023 and began steps to draft the 2023 PRC Year End Report and 2023 Plan of Action.

#### Public Spaces Master Plan Implementation Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Did not meet

Planning Activities/SPRC (Steve Sockwell and Caroline Haynes)

Commissioner Sockwell:

There was limited activity in November. I sat in on only one SPRC, the Americana Hotel. The Americana is a long, skinny site between Rt. 1 and Eads Street. The proposal is for a residential building with ground floor retail. The staff had reservations because the proposal doesn't meet the sector plan's requirements for building frontage (build-to lines specifically) or step backs on frontage, but the Committee didn't pick up on these concerns. From our viewpoint, the project looks pretty good, with tree plantings proposed on the north, south and east. The applicant is proposing a green roof and (thanks to a suggestion from David Howell) we suggested a way to expand the roof. This was the first SPRC meeting and more details will follow.

Other activities included the Sunrise Living Special GLUP study but the meeting was cancelled. The applicant offered a bare bones presentation and, based on that and a much more detailed Neighborhood powerpoing, there are serious questions about tree preservation plans. So far, no dates for future meetings. Although the pipeline for SPRC projects appears to be drying up, staff has been taking comments on Wakefield Manor, Crystal Towers and the YMCA projects, so meetings will start up soon.

I also monitored the ZOCO meeting for the Missing Middle Housing Study. Caroline spoke eloquently at length at the meeting and Josh was also in attendance at the meeting. My impression is that the Committee understood that the proposals may negatively impact the tree canopy, but doesn't want to be overly prescriptive in requiring standards for trees (or parking) to discourage use of the planned zoning changes. Only one Planning Commissioner, Elizabeth Gearin, appeared really concerned about the impact of the changes on trees and the inconsistency with meeting the County's biophillic and FNRC plans, so the meeting was discouraging for tree-huggers and similar folks.

Commissioner Haynes:

I don't have much to add to Steve's summary below on the Missing Middle deliberations. The Planning Commission will be meeting on Thursday, Dec. 15 (same time as FNRC meeting) to discuss possible motions to the proposed Request to Advertise (RTA). The RTA will establish the scope of issues for the County Board to consider beyond what is in the staff report. We have been in discussion about expanding the tree planting under option 6 (A) to require one shade tree and one small/ornamental tree per unit of Expanded Housing Option (see summary attached), but it is not clear how much traction that will have. The PC heard public comment on Monday night with over 90 speakers, representing both support and opposition to the proposed Missing Middle Zoning changes.

Public Facilities Review Commission (Kate Donohue)

No report

Langston Highway (Caroline Haynes)

Nothing new to report

### Tree Stewards (Noreen Hannigan)

Tree Stewards members (according to my arithmetic) have logged approximately 3,557 hours of volunteer service in 2022 to date. (And I'm sure there will be some more logged before the end of the year.) Members are in the process of voting on the 2023 candidates for the TS Board. Nora Palmatier is running for President again, but has announced she will step down after 2023. The annual Membership Meeting (with a potluck social following) will be held on Saturday, January 8, 2023.

### Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

Applications are being accepted by EcoAction Arlington for spring planting through January 6, 2023. Information about the program, the species being offered, and the online application form are available at [Tree Canopy Fund \(ecoactionarlington.org\)](https://www.ecoactionarlington.org).

In addition, a new **Tree Canopy Equity Program** serving 10 low-canopy neighborhoods has been launched. Private property owners can apply for canopy trees, as well as select understory trees and native shrubs. The goal is to improve canopy coverage and native vegetation in these traditionally underserved areas. For more information on this program, a list of the species available, and the online application form, see [Tree Canopy Fund \(ecoactionarlington.org\)](https://www.ecoactionarlington.org)

The **Tree Maintenance Pilot** committee did not meet this month.

### Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee met jointly with the Pedestrian Advisory Committee on Monday, December 5, 2022. Most of the meeting was devoted to hearing from Dan Reinhard, Senior Project Manager for VDOT, and his team about Phase 2 of the Route 1 Multimodal Improvements project. The committees were given a review of the public information meeting that took place on November 14. They went over a lot of details, a few of which included discussions of how peak traffic times have changed before and after the pandemic (dropped significantly in the morning hours in particular); ways to reduce speeds; whether to go with an overpass/underpass pedestrian configuration at 18th Street or an All-Pedestrian phase for the lights; and the opportunity to reconfigure the worn-out bridge off the exit ramp from I-395 to SB Rt. 1. Many members of the BAC voiced their concerns that the project is geared more toward improvements for people in cars, not for people on foot or on bicycles. Someone also made the comment that with Amazon coming and 1,000+ residents being added at the Riverside Apartments, traffic volumes are going to increase again, and this is not being taken into consideration. Here is a link to the November 14 virtual meeting:

[https://vimeo.com/771201915/7f1257af28?embedded=true&source=video\\_title&owner=29239061](https://vimeo.com/771201915/7f1257af28?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=29239061)

Leah Gerber, Principal Planner DES/DOT and BAC staff liaison, was to update the committees on the Preliminary Intersection Concepts in connection with the South George Mason Drive Multimodal Transportation Study, but she said the virtual public meeting has been postponed until January. FYI from the County website:

December 1, 2022 Update: The Virtual Community Meeting for Phase 3 of the S. George Mason Drive Multimodal Transportation Study will be rescheduled for mid-January 2023. The project team felt there was more work to be done to refine the concept for the S. Four Mile Run Drive intersection and to develop a final cross section for Segment 3 (S. Four Mile Run Drive to S. Dinwiddie Street). Over the next few weeks, the project team will be focusing on:

- Balancing tradeoffs at the intersection of S. George Mason Drive and S. Four Mile Run Drive. This includes looking at tradeoffs involving traffic signal timing, different transportation modes, and available space.
- Improving safety for all users – pedestrians, transit riders, cyclists, and motorists.
- Creating a connected bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Mary Dallao, Program Director for Walk Arlington, gave updates on both Bike Arlington and Walk Arlington activities. She said there will be winter biking events, including Bike To Work Day on Feb. 10, which will include 2 pit stops in Arlington. In addition, there were 2 bike-light distribution events in November, and 286 bikers stopped and got free lights. There are now 109 Capital Bike Share stations in Arlington. On a different subject, Ms. Dallao reported that there are now over 800 dockless e-bikes available in Arlington. As for walking, she reported that Walk Arlington's 8-Week Walking Challenge Program just concluded, and it was very successful and they are looking at the feedback from the participant surveys now. <https://www.walkarlington.com/walkarchallenge/>

Several announcements were made at the conclusion of the meeting:

- The National Park Service's meeting on Mount Vernon Trail Improvements is being held on Dec. 6. Public comments will be due on Jan. 4.
- Input is due on Dec. 11 for the Arlington Blvd. Trail Study
- An informational meeting on Dec. 6 at 7:00 concerning the Barcroft Apartments Development Plan <https://www.barcroftmfdp.com> (I have not had time to look at this closely, but perhaps it will affect mature trees in that community?)
- The YMCA property on Kirkwood St. is going to be redeveloped with a 7-storey office/residential/recreation building, with a 300-space parking lot. Cynthia Palmer, BAC Chair, asked for a BAC volunteer to participate in the site plan review process.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Vacant)

No report

Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee (ArNac) (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 (Steven Bernheisel)

No report

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Kirsten Ann Conrad)

No report



*New Business*

Commissioner Handler raised the Missing Middle Housing Study, Commissioner Haynes added context on the ongoing meeting. Commissioner Handler suggested regrouping on this issue in January. Suggest supporting 1 shade/1 ornamental, setback requirements.

A letter was suggested to respond to planning commission of 12/15/22. The motion passed to draft a letter and send it to the County Board. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at **9:37 PM**.