

## **Forestry and Natural Resources Commission**

*7:00 p.m., December 16, 2021*

### **Microsoft Teams conference meeting**

*Guests, Commissioners and Staff – Introductions and Sign-in*

Commissioners: Phil Klingelhofer, David Howell, John Carey, Kate Donahue, Nat Ames, Noreen Hannigan, Evelio Rubiella, Bill Browning, Caroline Haynes, Steve Sockwell, Kit Norland, Shawn Norton.

Staff: Vincent Verweij, Jose Portuhondo, Steven Bernheisel (APS)

Guests: Mary Glass, Jonathan Walsh, Bernard Berne

Public comments:

Jonathan Walsh introduced himself.

Bernard Berne asked to cut the budget in mowing.

Mary Glass spoke about the Civic Federation report, and offered to discuss it with a sub-group of commissioners.

*Introduction of Urban Forester – Jose Portuhondo*

No action items

*State Tree Conservation Workgroup – Vincent Verweij*

No action items

*Civic Federation Report – Phil Klingelhofer*

A subcommittee was suggested. Nat Ames, Phil Klingelhofer, John Carey, Kate Donohue, and Bill Browning are interested in being part of this subcommittee.

*FY23 Budget Roundtable – Steve Sockwell*

Steve Sockwell attended on behalf of the commission. Discussions were had about improving maintenance, park access, and climate change.

Prepare to write a letter by the January meeting.

Steve Sockwell will write a draft.

*Pentagon City PDSP Letter – Caroline Haynes*

David Howell suggested emphasizing the precedent-setting nature of the PDSP, and encouraged commissioners to email Matt Mattauszek.

The commission approved the letter unanimously with the emphasis note from David.

*2021 Annual Report and Workplan – Phil Klingelhofer*

The report and workplan were approved unanimously

*Commission Infrastructure (Work Plan, Annual Report, Memberships)*

No updates.

*Staff Reports*

**Maintenance:**

- Staff met with our tree maintenance contractor to kick off the preventive pruning pilot program. We anticipate pruning and some removals to start next week. Fairlington is the first area we are addressing, and all of Fairlington’s residents have been made aware of this program.
- The tree crew are close to having addressed most of the highest risk issues in their queue. Lower risk requests remain, as we have seen the highest amount of tree maintenance requests this year.

**Planning:**

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

Long-term planning

- Staff got briefed on a component of the housing plan, to conserve multi-family homes, and how tree conservation can be best integrated in this component.

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

New and under review:

- Staff reviewed the final landscape plan for **Amazon’s HQ2/Pen Place** site with Natural resources staff. The current designs do not have anymore “project killers”, and technical issues will be worked out if the County Board approves the project as currently designed.

- Americana: A concept plan was submitted for this project with significant coverage of the site with a building. This site will have to follow Crystal City tree canopy targets.
- 4600 Fairfax Drive: A new proposal was submitted for this site. There are opportunities for tree conservation on the Western edge, and planting throughout the site.
- Potomac Yards Landbay C: the project is under review

Approved and/or under construction:

- Ballston Central United Methodist Church – Demolition is underway

#### DES

- Ballston Multimodal metro station – Some trees died during the project, not related to construction, and will be replaced.
- Donaldson Run Tributary B – Staff met on site to conserve additional trees, and work with access requirements.

#### Parks

- Staff inspected 82 trees planted within Bluemont Park. The trees were assessed for condition, location and recorded into Cartegraph.
- Trees were inspected at John Robinson park for planting. Some trees were rejected for incorrect species or structure.
- South Park, the park near the bridge to Alexandria, along Four Mile Run, is getting started on the first phase of construction. Invasive trees and vegetation will be removed soon.
- Rosslyn Highlands park – This park is substantially completed, and all trees are installed, and in good health.
- Bluemont Tennis courts – Design alternatives are being considered for tree conservation and planting.
- Jennie Dean Park – Trees will be selected in the nursery on Friday, 12/17, for planting.
- New Park along Eads St – Designs are at 50%, and are being reviewed for conservation of the existing cottonwood and planting.

#### By-right projects

- No reports

#### Schools

- No reports

## Federal

- Staff met with DES staff to discuss the new proposed **Arlington National Cemetery trail**. The comments that staff provided were taken into consideration and the trail was shifted to maximized tree protection of the mature canopy. We requested a better tree inventory of the existing trees and the whole scope of the plans since only a section of the plans were submitted to our agency.

## Tree Planting:

- The SE quadrant **tree planting** will begin on Friday.

## Outreach:

- No reports

## Personnel:

- Jose Portuhondo attended ISA training, and took the test to become a certified arborist.

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

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

At the last meeting we had a report from Jim Hurley, Virginia Native Plant Society representative to the state level working group on non-native invasive species, and Jen Soles on Arlington's invasive species management program. The news from the state level working group was very discouraging with the Virginia Nursery and Landscaping Association basically backing out of what little they had agreed to prior to the most recent election. Additional legislation will likely be offered again this year but control on the sale of highly invasive species by the nursery industry in Virginia is still a long way off.

The update on Arlington's invasive management program for the past ten years highlighted the tremendous progress made in Arlington, with many parks now being in maintenance mode. However, the funding for invasive species removal has flatlined at \$100,000 for the past ten years. That static level of funding now covers only maintenance mode for the parks that have been treated, meaning that additional funding will be necessary if new parks are to be treated.

### Public Spaces Master plan Implementation Advisory Group

No meeting in December. Gillian Burgess will be the Bicycle Advisory Group rep to the PSMP-IAC and the Natural Trails working group. We

will likely have a meeting in early January to bring her up to speed (after Elizabeth Kiker stepped down as BAC rep).

#### Park and Recreation Commission (David Howell)

The Park and Recreation Commission met on December 14 with the following agenda items: Final consideration of a proposed memorial plaque for Larry Finch. This proposal was briefed to PRC in July, and referred as standard procedure to HALRB and NCAC. Both groups approved this recognition unanimously, and PRC voted unanimously to recommend to the County Board that it be approved. PRC also reviewed proposed meeting dates for 2022, all of which will be virtual until further notice. The agenda also included review and approval of the end-of-year report from PRC to the CB, as well as the workplan for 2022. During the reports portion of the meeting there was substantial discussion of the latest engagement presentation on the Clarendon Sector Plan. PRC will send a letter on this fairly soon. Finally, the commission recognized Bill Ross for his 8 years of service on PRC, including serving as chair, and many commissioners made congratulatory remarks as he completes his extended appointment to the commission this month.

#### Planning Activities Notification (Steve Sockwell and Caroline Haynes)

##### *Commissioner Haynes:*

1300 and 1305 N. Pierce Street (Marbella Apartments) Nov. 22 meeting revealed that tree preservation on site is not a possibility given the magnitude of the project. They are planning to replace all trees on site and are proposing some significant tree planting along the Northern edge of site A to create a buffer with the neighbors in the adjacent townhomes. There was some pushback from some SPRC members that little or no accommodations should be made for the neighbors since that might sacrifice several of the affordable housing units. My comments focused on the need to support the tree canopy and at least some elements of biophilic design for both the residents and the neighbors.

PenPlace Dec. 6 meeting: Technical difficulties delayed the start of the meeting which had almost 80 people in attendance. Most comments supported the changes made from previous iterations, including a commitment to bird safe glass, expanded use of green roofs, operable windows, incorporation of biophilic design elements such as wooden timbers in the retail pavilions, creation of the forest walk (though concerns were raised about accessibility along the northern edge of the site) and, focus on the pedestrian and biking experience through the site (including location and design of garage entrances). There were still some objections to the similarity in the height of the three office buildings in that the skyline will be monotonous surrounding the helix. Despite there being a separate park planning process, there was a fair amount of detail about the planned forest walk and general layout of the public space.

Pen Place Park Master Plan: The second public engagement for the Pen Place Park Master Planning process is open now until December 20. I encourage each of you to take a [look at the site](#) and weigh in with your comments.

*Commissioner Sockwell:*

Pen Place (the new Amazon HQ site)

I was on the call, but participated as a member of the general public. Caroline Haynes represented FNRC and did her usual splendid job. Caroline, as with most of the committee members, was generally supportive of the site plan. Caroline expressed support for the landscaping plans and was encouraged by the increased detail of biophilic planning. She was also OK with shrinking the central green area if doing so meant additional plantings or trees. The County staffer, Peter Schultz, was largely uncritical of Amazon's current plans, though Peter is pushing the applicant to enhance planned paths, including more plantings. Most committee members seemed to feel Amazon has been responsive to suggested changes. We'll have at least one more site plan meeting.

Clarendon Sector Plan Update

The backstory here is that Caroline & I wrote a letter for Phil's signature that strongly criticized plans to site the fire station and housing units on county-owned space. The space is now the site of the fire station, but was planned as possible park space some day. In this meeting, a couple of Civic Associations (Lyon Park and Ashton Heights) also spoke against the plan because there is almost no other green space within the study area. All this must have struck a nerve in some county planners because the focus of this meeting was largely on future plans for the site on which the firestation currently sits. The staff presented five scenarios to incorporate in plans - the site with (1) a fire station alone (2) fire station plus housing (3) no fire station (43,000 s.f. park) (4) fire station plus green area (10,000 s.f. green space) and (5) housing plus green space (17,000 s.f. green area.) Of course, some of the alternatives assume the fire station can be relocated in the study area and the County so far is taking the position that it can't be. The consensus from discussion was that the committee wants to preserve some green space, no matter how small. There were also constructive comments that the County might consider locating some recreational facility, like a gym, on top of the fire station (also keeping green space) and might investigate locating the fire station in one of the commercial sites in the study area (something we did in Rosslyn.) Unclear now what the next County plan will look like, but it likely will call for some retention of green space onsite- just my guess, of course.

Langston Blvd. Planning (Caroline Haynes):

There was a virtual community meeting last week that unfortunately I had to miss. They have not yet released the preliminary draft and were looking for input on stated goals and managing impacts. There continues to be lots of pushback from neighbors.

Tree Stewards (Kate Donohue)

Tree Stewards will be holding a Training Class starting in 2022. Lectures will be held on Zoom, with in-person field trips conducted throughout the semester. The application period closes Dec. 31. Almost 50 people have signed up, with only a few more slots remaining. The class will be broken up into smaller groups for the in-person sessions, and TS members are being recruited to assist the instructors with logistics.

The organization held an end-of-year meeting (and potluck lunch) at the Barcroft Picnic Pavilion on Dec. 11. A good time was had by all. Elections were held for Board positions, and Nora Palmatier was elected President. (John Wingard will remain involved as an at-large board member.)

To date, Tree Steward volunteers have recorded over 2,200 hours (which will no doubt be higher by the end of the year as more December hours come in).

The November Brandymore Castle planting event was carried in the Arlington Connection paper. Here is the link to the write-up. <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/dec/07/tree-stewards-tackle-degraded-paths-brandymore-cas/>

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

The Tree Canopy Fund will be accepting applications through midnight, January 7. To review the tree species being offered and the application form, go to <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/trees/tree-canopy-fund-application-spring-2022/> .

DeShay Williams of Eco Action Arlington has organized a project to target apartment complexes, especially those in underserved areas of the county, for TCF outreach. Volunteers have received training, materials, and contact information. To date, 51 trees at several complexes will have applications submitted. Progress!

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

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

9:00 PM New Business

No new business

**Next Meeting: January 27, 2021**