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

January 26, 2023

The **FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION** convened its meeting at **7:00 PM** on January 26, 2023.

PRESENT (IN-PERSON) Commissioners Phil Klingelhofer, Kate Donohue, John Carey, Nat Ames, Steven Sockwell, Noreen Hannigan, Caroline Haynes, David Howell, and Josh Handler

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY) Commissioners Melody Mobley and Colt Gregory had medical reasons to call in virtually.

ABSENT Commissioner Bill Browning and Steven Bernheisel (APS)

STAFF Vincent Verweij (DPR), Ryan Delaney (DPR), Rita Peralta (DPR), Alonso Abugattas (DPR)

MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES

Public comment:

Dr. Bernard Berne spoke about the letter to NOVA Parks, concerned about the proposed trails and plant palette expected from the trails.

Update on Deer Assessment – Alonso Abugattas

Alonso Abugattas presented on the update on the Deer study

Questions followed about timing, coordination with the FNRP.

Nature Centers – Rita Peralta

Rita Peralta presented on Nature Center staffing.

Questions followed about the impact of the decline in hours, how much is needed to fully staff the nature centers, and what budget would be needed to fully staff them.

Recommended Tree lists – Vincent Verweij

Vincent Verweij presented the updated recommended tree lists.

Questions followed about context with the Missing Middle Housing Study, and specifics on the list. The lists will be shared with the commission.

A letter was proposed during this discussion, on the option 6A in the Missing Middle Housing Study, to be discussed at the February meeting.

Stormwater Utility and NOVA Parks Letters – Phil Klingelhofer

A question was posed about how the analysis for the stormwater utility could include tree canopy components. Staff will work with DES staff to look at this option.

The stormwater utility letter passed unanimously, with 2 commissioners absent

The NOVA Parks letter had minor edits discussed and approved during the meeting, and passed unanimously, with 2 commissioners absent.

Staff Reports

Maintenance:

- There is an increase in requests for tree grate removal in the Clarendon area, which staff are reviewing.
- The fifth and sixth batch of preventive maintenance in Fairlington has been completed, Staff continues to inventory trees at (31st St S from S Buchanan St and S Abingdon St.)
- Batch # 7 of preventive maintenance in Fairlington is scheduled for this month with approximately 33 pruned trees and 1 removal.
- The duplex areas of Arlington Heights are being inventoried for tree work.
- The tree crew and contractor have been working to catch up on existing requests. All open work can be found here:
<https://arlgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bf2615b2be834085b5bf27b0ff574d13>

Planning:

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

Long-term planning

- Additional comments were provided to planners and project managers working on the multi-use trail along route 50 to minimize tree impact.
- Foresters continue to work with DES planners on the proposed W&OD trail connection at East Falls Church Metro station.
- Route One comments from VDOT are scheduled to be reviewed by staff on the first of February. This project may increase tree canopy in this corridor.
- Staff met to discuss options to improve tree planting as part of the Missing Middle Housing Study.
- Onsite discussion of three small parks in the Virginia Square Planning Area (Maury Park, Herselle Milliken Park, and Ball Park). These three parks are part of the Public Spaces Master Plan and will have a combination of passive and active enhance the facility for the public to enjoy. The timeline is for the Park Master Plan to be adopted in early 2024.

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

- In review:
 - Forester joined virtual meeting with County staff to address the open comments on Crystal Towers 3. There are county efforts for the retail space to be pushed back, providing space for more trees to be conserved.
 - Forester met with the developer to address the open comments from the Form-Based Code site at 3401 Columbia Pike. This is the third review cycle, and most of the forestry comments will be resolved.
 - The forester met with county planner to discuss comments that were still pending for the Wells Fargo Site plan. Pending comments such as meeting the canopy cover requirements, tree spacing, streetscape, and 10th Road clarification on whether the road is ROW or private.
 - Discussion of the open comments of the CEPL22-0002 at Century Center Residential. The most significant comment from forestry was for the applicant not to use structural soil for the project and to find an alternative route. The soil calculations should also be clearer in the landscape plan and be on a separate page.
 - Reviewed the resubmission from the Sunrise Senior Living project at 716 S Glebe Road and the plans were rejected as no effort was made to preserve the large oak on the property. The county forester met with the architect and the suggestions were not considered.
 - Reviewed the application at 1331 and 1221 S Eads St. These two sites are adjacent to each other. Both applicants had comments such as the need for canopy cover calculations and for the plans to show clear soil volume and distribution.
 - Review of the Wakefield Manor Cul-de-sac (2025 Fairfax DR -SPLN22-0000). It was great to see that the developer is trying to improve the streetscape, but it was made clear that any offsite canopy improvement will be based on the replacement for the large tree removal. It is still expected for the applicant to meet its onsite canopy cover requirements and their streetscape onsite.
 - Marbella redevelopment is coming back through for review. All the utility work for this multi-phase project will be executed in the first phase. Outstanding is how the utility work will be permitted and how the trees lost to that work will be replaced.
- Approved:
 - Forester inspected the tree installation at 1420 South Rolfe Street. The initial plant material has been approved. A final is still required once the plant material is delivered and installed.
 - Inspection of the by-right project at 1103 N Vermont. The controls were installed properly and matched the approved plans. Urban forester requested the applicant for the chain-link fence to be reinforced since it was loose.
 - Preconstruction at 1820 Fort Myer Drive. This demolition will start within the next couple of weeks. Before this, the urban forester will inspect 5 offsite trees that require a tree protection fence and once installed, the applicant can start.

DES

- BCD Waterline PIM meeting. The meeting's purpose was to determine the impact the new waterline could have on the existing canopy around Long Bridge. The contractor did an excellent job marking the scope of work and keeping the specimen trees outside the disturbance area.
- Preconstruction meeting was held for Columbia Pike multimodal Segment A. Forester is working to save five trees from impact.
- A field preconstruction meeting was held for Columbia Pike multi-modal Segment F. Tree protection was modified to better retain trees to be conserved with the consent of the project manager, design staff, and contractor.
- Forester inventoried trees for a sidewalk and lighting project along N Monroe Street between 17th ST and 19th ST and at S Irving St between 6th and 7th STs S, to help in the conversation to minimize impact to those private trees.
- Numerous multi-modal and site plan development projects are occurring simultaneously in Crystal City. The foresters are working to ensure that the overlap is communicated and monitored, and that feedback is consistent.
- The mini-forest project at 6415 24th st N has been accepted. DES specified native grass as cover which germinated better than was expected due to the warm winter.
- The N Monroe and 36th ST N storm improvements project is getting close to being realized. Staff is working to resolve some outstanding tree impact issues where the design requires refinement.
- The Boundary Channel Drive project is ongoing. Utility conflicts with the Longbridge park site are being resolved.

Parks

- Final inspection at Towers Park to ensure all the trees were planted onsite. In total 22 trees were planted, and the protected trees are in good condition. The project has been accepted by forestry.
- Alcova Heights Park Progress Meeting. The landscaper wants to continue planting in the next couple of weeks as the project could be completed by early spring.
- Gunston Bubble site meeting to discuss the Dominion path to install electricity to the new soccer facility. Dominion did not accept the original plan to complete the bore through the tree protection area. Urban Forester inspected the site to make sure that any proposed excavation would be conducted outside the critical root of the most significant trees.
- Internal discussion of the Lacey Woods Park Renovations. This conversation was the initial concept before planning. The scope of work is not anticipating significant canopy removal of the existing trees. The current conversation calls for the removal of one invasive mulberry and two small Redbuds as they are too close to the bathrooms.
- Internal discussion of the Bluemont Park Bridges Renovation. During the meeting two options were reviewed, Option #1 Replace the existing low water crossing and permanently remove the existing pedestrian bridge with minimal canopy impact. Option #2 Repair the existing low water crossing and replace the existing pedestrian bridge with

an ADA compliant pedestrian-only bridge which will lead to the removal of more than 10 trees. Currently forestry is supporting option #1 and is waiting community involvement.

By-right projects

- Reviewed the plans for the Grove at Dominion Hills (Former Febrey House site). Most of the larger comments have been resolved. The applicant must ensure that all the trees have sufficient soil volume to thrive and use adequate species for street trees. Application was approved a Two weeks later.
- Discussion of the by-right project CEPL22-00088 at 2122 South Nelson Street. The site has two large trees impacted by utility, and grading and not conserved. The site will gain more than 20% of the canopy once the proposed trees are installed.

Schools

- Staff is reviewing a move of a playground at the Career Center, prior to the larger planning of the site. Discussions are being had to understand where street trees will be located on the ultimate site.

Federal

- No projects

Tree Planting:

Fall 2022 Tree Planting by the numbers:

- Start date - 21 November 2022
- Trees planted - 500
- Replacement trees planted – 18
- Mileage driven – 811
- Mileage walked – 139.6
- Cans of spray paint used – 13
- Finish date – 6 January 2023
- Average number of trees planted per day +/- 14

Outreach:

- Urban Forestry did an in-house review of the Tree Canopy Fund application for trees to be planted on private property. In total 103 applications were recommended for approval, 4 applications approved with conditions, 13 applications were missing information and 2 applications were rejected. Urban Forestry worked with Tree Stewards and the Tree Canopy fund to review the 15 applications that were deferred or rejected and approximately an additional 55 applications for trees from the tree equity program. With the exception of the applications rejected because the trees requested were on the ROW or in implantable spaces, all applications were either accepted as is or

sent back to the Tree Canopy Fund for them to negotiate another tree type or location. Group Lists still remain to be reviewed.

- Tomorrow Urban Forestry is conducting a follow-up meeting with the first cohort of structural pruners. Structural pruners have pruned the majority of plantings done by the tree planting program. They are also pruning in certain Civic Associations.

Personnel:

- No updates

Other:

- Reviewed an illegal tree removal at 5020 Williamsburg BLVD. The homeowner/contractor was directed to pay into the stormwater fund based on Tree replacement calculations.
- Staff is working with RPA reviewers on illegal tree removal and illegal paving in an RPA along Columbia Pike. The resolution is still being pursued.
- The Equipment Division installed a charging dock in truck #4227, to aid in our electric chainsaw transition.

Commissioner Reports

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

At the January 9 meeting we heard from Susan Bell, former Director of Arlington County's Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development. Susan was Director of CPHD when lot coverage was last addressed and she provided some fascinating background on the history and context of the changes to lot coverage that were adopted by the County Board in 2005. Most notably, when the changes were enacted in 2005, the focus was on large homes very much out of character of surrounding neighborhoods and there was essentially no discussion about tree canopy or storm water runoff.

Park and Recreation Commission (Colt Gregory)

Discussion with County Board Member PRC Liaison, Takis Karatonis

Security and Policing in Arlington County Parks with Michael Simons, Division Chief Parks and Natural Resources

Deer Management update, Alonso Abugattas, DPR, Natural Resources Manager

Discussion of PRC Action Plan for 2023, Chair - Shruti Kuppa

Takis Karatonis -- Board Member Karatonis noted the draft of the Forestry and Natural Resources Management Plan is likely to be available late Spring. Also noted that the Board has approved \$150K to accelerate the collection Arlington tree canopy data. Board Member Karatonis was interested in the development of quality measures/benchmarks for our parks. Commission members continued to press for more park land acquisition incorporation of

biophilic best practices into Site Plans. How can we reward/ encourage plans that build-in strong biophilic elements into the initial site plan design.

Security and Policing -- Arlington County park policing within DPR is addressed with 4 full time Park Rangers from 7:30am - 9:30pm. Issues include graffiti, vandalism, dogs off leash and broken locks. Rangers request assistance from ACPD as needed.

Deer Management Update - Alonso Abugattas, DPR Natural Resources Manager. The first round of community engagement for the deer assessment is likely to begin in March 2023.

The PRC discussed priorities for the for the 2023 work plan.

Public Spaces Master Plan Implementation Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Nothing to report

Planning Activities/SPRC (Steve Sockwell and Caroline Haynes)

Caroline Haynes: I sat in on the LRPC Special GLUP meeting in Steve and Nat's absence. Given that there are already non-conforming uses on some parcels under consideration, there is a fair amount of pressure to move forward on this Special GLUP, despite strong objections from the neighbors. I and at least one other participant focused on the strong desire to save the grove of mature trees along Glebe Road. In follow up notes, this was added as one of the key priorities for the neighborhood. This is the first step on redevelopment of the site (a much larger senior living center is proposed). If the Special GLUP is adopted, there will still need to be a Site Plan Review Committee before this moves forward. During Planning Commission consideration of the Request to Advertise (RTA) for Missing Middle Housing rezoning, an amendment was offered and adopted to ostensibly work toward increasing tree canopy. The wording of the amendment was quite vague:

The PC recommends that the county staff consider a weighted system for counting tree requirements under Set. 10.4.6.E to provide the flexibility to meet the requirement by planting combinations of shade trees and other trees.

Staff has since rejected its applicability when sending the proposal on to the County Board for the RTA. In conversation with Phil, we opted not to send another MMH letter to the Board as we would simply be repeating the items from the FNRC's most recent letter.

Kate Donohue: The first SPRC meeting for the ARVA project at Arlington Blvd. and North Pershing St. was held on January 23. The project replaces the Days Inn motel. The meeting focused on the building and transportation issues. Overall, the building meets requirements, and a number of improvements to expand the open space were welcomed. A 10,000 square-foot casual park will be built at the corner of Arlington Blvd. and Pershing, and a number of upgrades and improved accessibility to the Arlington Blvd. public pedestrian/bike path will be made. There are many opportunities to plant large canopy trees, as well as smaller trees and native plants. The landscaping plan will be available for discussion at the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for March 20.

There were no meetings for the Wakefield Manor project this past month.

Public Facilities Review Commission (Kate Donohue)

No report

Langston Highway (Caroline Haynes)

Nothing to report

Tree Stewards (Noreen Hannigan)

The Tree Stewards closed out 2022 by installing deer fencing around trees at Fort Scott Park. Then the Tree Stewards held their annual Membership Meeting on Sunday, January 8, 2023. President Nora Palmatier noted that the final total of volunteer hours for 2022 was 3,998 (1,670 of which were performed in Arlington). Nora also mentioned that 175 people from all over the country visited the Tree Stewards website looking for information on removing ivy from trees. In addition, she announced that Melissa Guildea (County Urban Forestry staff) has trained 10 Tree Stewards to do pruning, and additional training will be offered this year. Vincent Verweij has asked for Tree Stewards' help in distributing mulch and wood chips around vulnerable trees County parks in weeks to come. To start, Tree Stewards will hold work parties at Gum Ball Park and Quincy Park and then be receiving a list of additional locations. Also, on January 17, 2023, Vincent presented a Zoom talk to Tree Stewards on the subject of Planting and Managing Street Trees. Over 30 Tree Stewards and Master Naturalists attended the session.

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

Applications are being reviewed; we are trying a new process in which the Urban Forestry staff reviews the applications first, followed by the committee (FNRC, EcoAction, Tree Stewards) reviewing the rejected applications and doing any necessary follow-up.

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) met in a joint meeting with the Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) On Wednesday, January 11, 2023.

Mr. Elwyn Gonzalez, Associate Transportation Planner, DES/DOT, briefed the committees on Protected Bike Lane Quick-Build Projects. These are things that can be done quickly to enhance existing protected bike lanes, for example putting down precast concrete low curbs along some stretches.

Leah Gerber, BAC staff liaison (Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner, DES/DOT), reviewed some County Engagement opportunities and called attention to Arlington's "Engage Arlington" webpage, where projects of interest are listed. She encouraged members to submit their feedback on a couple of projects that will involve trail widening: The Arlington Blvd. Trail Improvement project (<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/Arlington-Boulevard-Trail-Improvements-%E2%80%93-N.-Granada-Street-to-N.-Edison-Street>), and the George Washington Parkway-Mount Vernon Trail project (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=124907>). David Patton, PAC staff liaison (Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner, DES/DOT), added that the Mount Vernon Trail

project will include major work to address stormwater drainage, and trail users will be diverted onto local streets for lengthy sections of trail, and that the work will last a long time (once it starts).

Allison Bullock (Transportation Planning Manager, DES/DOT) gave a presentation on Phase 2 of the VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Improvement Plan. Ms. Bullock updated the committees on the status of the plan and pointed out that south of S. 18th St., it includes one 13-foot median containing 2 rows of trees, and that north of S. 18th St., there will be three 13-foot medians for trees. One BAC member voiced objection to so much space being allocated for trees and suggested those should be reduced to allow more space for bikes and pedestrian safety. Another member praised the inclusion of trees and likened it to a successful and attractive project in New York. I also supported the inclusion of the trees and pointed out that they will serve as more than aesthetic appeal; they will be needed to help mitigate the heat island effect in South Arlington (due to lack of tree canopy), shade the roadway and walkway, and help address stormwater runoff.

The BAC and PAC also discussed their budget priorities for 2023.

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:

A discussion was had about assessing the survival of trees on land disturbance projects. Vincent Verweij will check with staff and Tree Stewards to see if this is a project that could be done with existing data.

Meeting adjourned at **9:20 PM**.