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

03/23/2023

The **FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION** convened its meeting at **7:00 PM** on **3/23/23**.

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

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY) Commissioner Melody Mobley, *participated virtually from home (via Teams) due to a medical condition that prevented their physical attendance.*

ABSENT Commissioners Stephen Sockwell, Bill Browning

STAFF Vincent Verweij, DPR

GUESTS Karen Firehock (Green Infrastructure Center), Mary Glass

MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES

Public comment

Eric Ackerman spoke about options in the Zoning ordinance to save trees

Green Infrastructure Center Tree Canopy Study

Introduction by Mary Glass. Karen Firehock presented on the tree canopy study.

Question followed about economic value of green space, analyzing based on lot coverage impact and impervious areas, competition between neighborhoods, USFS Funding availability, and Clarification on LiDAR

Dead and Downed trees policy

Vincent Verweij discussed the current policy of leaving dead wood or logs. A discussion followed about the details. Vincent will take the language back to the forestry Team and DPR leadership. It was suggested to adopt this language as part of the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan.

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Letter

Josh Handler suggested moving suggestions about natural and natural landscape areas earlier in the letter. Phil Klingelhofer suggested using PSMP language.

Commission Infrastructure

The commission discussed moving the physical location of the meeting.

Staff reports:

Staff reported on Arbor Day, Career Center, Alcova Heights, RiverHouse, Route 1, Route 50, Sunrise, Missing Middle.

Commissioner Reports:

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Jason Papacosma, Watershed Programs Manager for DES, provided an overview of the implications of LDA 2.0 and the recently adopted updates to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Plan on overall impervious surfaces. Discussion focused on how these two programs impact stormwater management and the implications for lot coverage. We discussed impervious surfaces that are not currently counted in lot coverage such as walkways, patios and swimming pools, that have a significant impact on overall impervious surface coverage and limit plantable areas for shade trees.

Park and Recreation Commission (Colt Gregory)

The **Park and Recreation Commission** and **Arlington County Sports Commission** held a joint meeting February 23, 2023.

Received FY'24 Operating Budget Update -- Jane Rudolph and Rebecca Schmitt began with the news that the Trust for Public Land has rated Arlington #3 in the US. The Trust ranks the 100 most populous U.S. cities by comparing five park categories: equity, access, investment, amenities, and acreage. The presentation also noted that County Operating Budget has an \$8 million gap between revenue and expenditures.

Commission comments centered on:

- Restoring full staffing our to Nature Centers. Nature Centers are currently open only 3 days a week. PRC requests that Nature Center staffing be restored to pre-pandemic levels of 6 days per week.
- Supporting the 1 time \$100,000 for increase invasive removal funding and requested more long term funding for invasive removal activities.
- Supporting proposed budget additions and noting importance of additional long-term funding for tree maintenance and plantings.

Letters to the County Board

PRC wrote in a letter and made public comment to the Board on the proposed Operating Budget. PRC stated support for Nature Center staffing and increased long-term funding for invasive removal and tree maintenance and plantings.

PRC wrote the Board in support of the Stormwater Management Zoning Study being undertaken by staff and looked forward reviewing study results.

Public Spaces Master Plan Implementation Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for April 20.

Planning Activities/SPRC (Steve Sockwell and Caroline Haynes)

Caroline Haynes:

Staff reported that final drafting and internal review of the FNRP continues. Release of the next draft is expected sometime late spring with public engagement slated for June.

Last night the County Board adopted by a vote of 5-0 the zoning changes for Missing Middle Housing, including allowing up to six expanded housing units. The adopted tree planting requirements are a minimum of four shade trees for 2-4 units and eight trees for 5-6 units.

We've been told by staff that an update to the weed ordinance to allow for conservation landscaping may be before the County Board by the July meeting. We have not yet seen any proposed language.

Kate Donohue:

The Arva: The developer integrated many of the suggestions from the last meeting; this project is going well and will be a big improvement. Dark sky friendly lighting and bird-friendly glass is incorporated in the plans; although the current plan calls for not using bird-friendly glass for the lobby in order to be historically accurate. (This issue of bird-friendly glass in the lobby was raised by David Howell.)

The revised plan increases the number of trees (including canopy trees), and expands the green areas so there is a "green envelope" around the property. The emphasis is very much on native plantings. The developers were asked about a green roof/solar array, and while not outright rejected, it is unlikely either of these will be included. Apparently the roof includes amenities for the tenants that chops up the available space for either of these green options.

The bike path on the Arlington Blvd. side will feature an allee of canopy trees, and plans include rain gardens.

Public Facilities Review Commission (Kate Donohue)

The PFRC/BLPC met on March 15. Most of the discussion centered on issues related to parking, including ADA access; fencing of playgrounds; and construction phases and impact on the neighborhood.

For the streetscape, some of the street trees will be moved to the inside of the sidewalk, as the area between the sidewalk and the street will be left open for the undergrounding of wires and pipes. The lighting plan is being developed, but is anticipated to provide the usual streetlights on the streetscape and perimeter.

The next PFRC meeting is scheduled for May 17, although there may be one in April if needed. This meeting(s) will focus on construction plans.

Langston Highway (Caroline Haynes)

Staff is working on the final draft after receiving comments on the Preliminary Concept Plan. I submitted some additional comments focused on the need for specific tree canopy targets, better defined

guidelines for incorporating biophilic design into the overall planning and more intentional planning to connect proposed green spaces (similar to the green ribbon concept in the Pentagon City Plan).

Tree Stewards (Noreen Hannigan)

The Tree Stewards put out their annual report for 2022. It showed that there are 92 active Tree Stewards; 4,043 total hours volunteered (approx. 1200 in Alex; approx. 1800 in Arlington; the remainder region-wide) for a value equivalent of \$121,088 to paid employees; 5,251 people educated; and 9,826 trees served.

Tree Stewards were active during March with volunteer events. Invasive plants were removed from trees in forested areas around Jamestown Park and Lacey Woods Park. Also, at the request of Arlington County's Urban Forester (aka Vincent), 27 cubic yards of mulch were spread around the root zones of several mature canopy trees in Woodstock Park. (Thanks to a certain commissioner with the initials JC for joining the Tree Stewards for that activity.) Another mulching event will take place at Tuckahoe Park in the near future. (All are welcome to pitch in. Just let me know if you want to be notified when a date is known.)

In addition, the Training Committee has begun planning for a Fall training class.

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

No report

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee met on Monday, March 6, 2023. Ms. Hui Wang, Deputy Director for Transportation and Development, introduced herself and gave an overview of what her priorities will be coming into the job. Ms. Christine Baker, Transportation Program Manager, briefed the committee on how projects are prioritized under the Vision Zero Program. Mr. Robert Upton talked about trail-paving projects answered questions. He said that when asphalt heaves, they either grind down the asphalt or they dig out the tree roots. The remainder of the meeting was a discussion with Leah Gerber, County staff liaison to the BAC, of the DES organizational chart and upcoming engagement opportunities.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Vacant)

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)

Steve Bernheisel mentioned Arbor Day and Hoffman Boston planting at the meeting.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Kirsten Ann Conrad)

No report

New Business

Commissioner David Howell mentioned an open house about Crystal City projects and City Nature Challenge.

Commissioner Josh Handler mentioned opportunities coming from the missing middle discussion in the zoning ordinance, and mentioned monitoring requirements. A discussion about lot coverage followed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM.