

# Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

*7:00 p.m., November 18, 2021*

## Microsoft Teams conference meeting

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

Commissioners: Bill Browning, Caroline Haynes, David Howell, John Carey, Kit Norland, Nat Ames, Noreen Hannigan, Phil Klingelhofer, Steve Sockwell, Melody Mobley, Josh Handler

Staff: Vincent Verweij, Melissa Gildea, Ryan Delaney, Matt Mattauszek, Steven Bernheisel

Guests: no guests

Public comments: no public comments.

*Introduction of Urban Forester – Melissa Gildea*

No action items

*Approval of Letters (Missing Middle, Deer Management) – Phil Klingelhofer*

Missing Middle: Commissioner Haynes suggested providing a summary paragraph. Commissioner Norland supported to reinforce the connection to earlier letter. Commissioner Hannigan supported a summary with detail.

The letter was approved unanimously with the change to add a summary paragraph that does not change the substance of the letter.

Deer Management: Caroline shared some small technical changes in the letter. There was discussion about the inclusion of “killing” in the letter.

The letter was approved, with one abstaining

*2021 Annual Report and Workplan – Phil Klingelhofer*

Report: Discussion on the use of the word “Pleaded”, climate change inclusion. Technical edits. Adding FNRP. Concern about inclusion of ATAG. Change dates to appropriate year. Include planning work.

Work plan: VDOT Planting, NOVA parks, study to see if 20% is achieved on developed lots.

No action items, to be voted on at next meeting.

Pentagon City Study – Matt Mattauszek

No action items

Commission Infrastructure (Work Plan, Annual Report, Memberships)

No action items

Staff Reports

**Maintenance:**

- The team has started implementing the preventive pruning program, designed to promote sustainable trees. Benefits include reducing the risk of branch breakage, structural defects, better clearance for vehicles and pedestrians, improved health, appearance. This is a pilot program using one-time funding for maintenance.
- Requests for tree maintenance have slowed down for the month of November, and staff are able to respond to more requests than are coming in, bringing down total request numbers.
- Staff is working on communicating expectations for turnaround on tree maintenance, with high requests waiting to be addressed. Reducing duplicate requests and inquiries, which often take time away from managing the work are some goals of the work.

**Planning:**

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

Long-term planning

- Staff is reviewing draft strategic directions for the Forestry and Natural Resources plan.

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

New and under review:

- The Ames Center site plan is going through its first reviews. One clear absence in the plans are street trees along Fort Myer Drive, which will be part of a future redevelopment of the road. The site meets its tree canopy in the center park, with street trees on other edges of the site.
- **Pen Place:** Staff met with the applicant to clarify basic requirements on soil volume, reducing the caliper of planted trees to improve long-term survival, and improving biophilic designs of the paths between buildings.
- The Crystal City Water Park site plan amendment was approved by the Board, and the applicant is working with staff to finalize the details for tree protection and planting on this project.

Approved and/or under construction:

- The Virginia Hospital Center is planting trees for the hospital expansion.

### DES

- Ballston Pond is under construction. This project will renovate this stormwater pond. Tree removal will likely look significant, and this project has been in planning for a long time. Learn more here: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Environment-Projects/Ballston-Pond-Restoration>

### Parks

- Rosslyn Highlands Park finished construction, and trees are planted. Some trees need some structural pruning, but are otherwise in good shape.
- Thomas Jefferson Park's upper field is being renovated. This project has a good example of how to reduce impact to soil and tree roots at the construction entrance, where protective matting was used to minimize impact.
- The New park at Eads St is going through design work. Utility conflicts with existing large utilities are limiting tree planting in some spaces, and staff are working to work with these challenges.
- Marcey Rd Park is starting construction. This project will have very low impact, and feature a reforestation.

### By-right projects

- The Army Navy Country Club pool renovation started. There was a misunderstanding between the project and the Country Club maintenance team, and some trees were impacted that will now be replaced. These will be replaced on the Country Club grounds.
- Staff are not receiving many new LDA permits, perhaps a lingering after-effect of the LDA2.0 implementation deadline. It's allowing staff to catch up on existing projects, to check on compliance.

### Schools

- No major updates

### Federal

- A trail is being proposed along the Arlington National Cemetery, which may impact some trees on ANC grounds. Impacts and replacement are being reviewed by staff.

### **Tree Planting:**

- Trees for planting have been approved for fall planting and the season will begin shortly. Staff recently worked with Tree Stewards to do a reforestation planting at Brandymore Castle, an unusual rock formation, within Madison Manor Park.

### **Outreach:**

- Staff will be holding presentations for private arborists to best design development projects to minimize impact to trees, and best plan for tree planting.

**Personnel:**

- Jose Portuhondo is one of the new Urban Forester with the county. He will be working with the permits and plan review processes of single-family homes and parks plan review concerning tree protection and implementation of the Chesapeake ordinances. This week he has become acquainted with OnBase and Cartegraph database systems that record and allocate Plan Review updates to the agency and constituents. Field inspections were also part of his training that included follow-up and final inspections for single-family homes.
- Melissa Gildea is easing into her position as an Urban Forester while managing tree planting this fall.
- Diego Murcia-Rojas has started in his position, focusing on the preventive pruning program, responding to complex maintenance requests, and starting on right-of-way permit reviews.
- Carlos Caceras and Carlos Gonzalez started as senior tree maintenance workers this week. They will be the de facto leads for their respective crews, coordinate work with the tree crew supervisor, and take first calls for callbacks.

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

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

No meeting on Nov. 1 but NRJAG will be meeting on Nov.29, with an update from Jim Hurley, Virginia Native Plant Society representative to the state level working group on non-native invasive species on proposed legislation. Jen Soles will also be providing an update on Arlington's invasive species management program.

Public Spaces Master plan Implementation Advisory Group

No meeting was held

Park and Recreation Commission (David Howell)

The November meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission included three main agenda items. The first two were presentations already received by FNRC: an overview of the Deer Survey Report and the 2nd draft of the Pentagon City Planning Study. The third agenda item was a review of commissioner roles and assignments, to update the list of

liaisons and representatives to other organizations, SPRCs and other projects.

Planning Activities Notification (Steve Sockwell and Caroline Haynes)

Next SPRC meeting on 1300 and 1305 N. Pierce Street (Marbella Apartments) is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 22.

SPRC meeting on PenPlace is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 6.

Langston Blvd. Planning (Caroline Haynes):

The group is now focused on renaming the short section of Rt. 309, commonly called "Old Lee Highway". The top 10 names can be found on the [LHA web page](#).

Tree Stewards (Kate Donohue)

The Tree Stewards are having an all-day planting event at Brandymore Castle on Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021. Tree Stewards bought \$1,500 worth of native plants from Earth Sangha, and plans to spend an additional \$500 on deer-fencing materials. In the future, Tree Stewards hopes to hold annual events like this (and furnish plants and materials) in both Arlington and Alexandria.

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

The Tree Canopy Fund is accepting applications through January 7, 2022, for planting in the spring. There are some exciting additions to the species list--I believe this is the first time we have offered Pignut Hickory.

The link to the EcoAction Arlington page with the information and application form can be found at:<https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/trees/tree-canopy-fund-application-spring-2022/>

Planting of trees for this Fall is ongoing, and being scheduled by zip code.

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee met Monday, Nov. 1, 2021. True confession: I forgot to attend. This report is based on the the minutes. (1) Steve Offutt was elected as the new Vice Chair (to replace Cynthia Palmer, who was elected a the new Chair at the October meeting). Therefore, the new Chair and Vice Chair are Cynthia Palmer and Steve Offutt, respectively. (2) BikeArlington program manager, David Balick, briefed the committee on services the group is providing in the community (classes, bike parking, bike-etiquette signs, sponsored rides,

coordination with Bike Share, distributing free lights, etc.). (3) Leah Gerber, Arlington County BAC staff, noted that the Public Spaces Master Plan and the Neighborhood Complete Streets groups need BAC reps, and Chair Cynthia Palmer asked for volunteers. (4) There was discussion about the problem of vehicles passing too closely to bicyclists (less than the 3-foot requirement) and vehicles driving in bike lanes. The group discussed asking for more protected lanes, but apparently it's a Fire Code issue. The BAC would like to talk with the Fire Department and County officials about some possible ideas. (5) The BAC is concerned about Dominion Energy's plans to rebuild its South Glebe Road substation (near Potomac Yards on lower Four Mile Run). Aside from general concerns about environmental impacts, the BAC is concerned with the bike trail detours. (Note: The power station project might be something the FNRC should look at, too. Check this 10-minute video from Dominion's website <https://power-viz.com/Glebe/>) (6) Leah Gerber (Arl. Co. staff) talked about an upcoming pilot program to address speed limits, flashing lights, etc., around school zones. (7) The BAC has been trying to work with the County on bicycle and pedestrian safety at VDOT's Rt. 1 project. The County offered to meet with BAC reps in September, but that meeting has not happened, nor has the County responded to the BAC's requests for information. The Chair and Vice Chair have a meeting with County Manager Schwartz this month and will raise the issue. (8) The issue of changing pedestrian crossing signals from lockdown-era automatic timing back to manual "beg buttons" will also be raised when Cynthia and Steve meet with the County Manager. The BAC (and its sister group, the Pedestrian Advisory Committee) are unhappy that the changes were implemented without public input and that the system isn't serving cyclists, pedestrians, or drivers adequately. (9) The BAC is working on an "Equity Map" of the ways bike safety and infrastructure are reflected across the county. Members of the BAC have noted that bike lanes, etc., in less affluent areas of the county are less numerous and in worse condition than in affluent areas. (Note: This seems similar to our concerns about lack of tree canopy.)

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Vacant)

No report

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

Clarendon Sector plan discussion on fire station and park space.  
Suggested a letter about planning to prioritize demand for park in denser space, and work with fire department location, and value of the land as park land.

**Next Meeting: December 16, 2021**