

Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

7:00 p.m., September 23, 2021

Microsoft Teams conference meeting

Guests, Commissioners and Staff – Introductions and Sign-in

Public comments

Mary Glass spoke about tree canopy studies.

Crystal City Water Park – JBG Smith

No action items.

Deer study results - David Farner and Alonso Abugattas

No action items

Public Art Master Plan support letter – Phil Klingelhofer

A letter of support, including a message on including biophilic opportunities, was approved by the commission, to be shared with the Board.

Commission Infrastructure (May Minutes, Work Plan, Annual Report, Memberships)

No action items.

Staff Reports

Maintenance:

- July and August came with the highest amount of tree requests in the last few years. Maintenance staff and contractors are continuing to work on addressing these requests.
- A plan is being created for preventive pruning funding to be used this Winter, directed by the new Urban Forester position

Planning:

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

Long-term planning

- The Pentagon City Planning study is ongoing, and includes opportunities for new planting and a Green ribbon through the planning area.

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

New and under review (updates at [Private Development & Site Plans \(arlingtonva.us\)](http://PrivateDevelopment&SitePlans.arlingtonva.us)):

- **Crystal City Water Park:** Staff worked with the applicant to reduce impacts to trees on the project. The revision is being shared with the public.
- **Crystal Plaza 5:** Opportunity project that will create public open space, but also remove trees from the median.
- **Macy's in Ballston:** Opportunity project that will create rooftop planting space and new tree pits.
- **Wendy's site:** Opportunity project with potential for rooftop trees
- **2351 Crystal Drive:** Underground garage now precludes the opportunity for conservation of trees. They will be replacing with more green space than was there.

Approved and/or under construction:

- Clarendon West: reviewing landscape plans.
- Courthouse Landmark: reviewing landscape plans
- Army Navy Country club pool renovation: Reviewing landscape plans

DES

- A concern about trees being tagged at Bluemont and N Emerson St turned out to be a false alarm. Trees were tagged by someone, but are not slated for removal for this project.
- Donaldson Run's stream restoration is ongoing. One small tree was damaged by a tree removal operation, and will be replaced.

Parks

- Long Bridge Park is having several openings. Hundreds of tree plantings were installed as part of this project, near the building, and along the Pentagon.
- Fort Scott's bathroom renovation started
- The Thomas Jefferson Upper Field Conversion was approved, and will help remediate some of the damage done by the County Fair, as well as improve the field. Tree planting is part of the project.
- Tuckahoe Park needs some stormwater improvements. Staff met, identified where impact to existing trees can be minimized.

By-right projects

- Several by-right projects have created conflicts between developers and neighbors. While forestry often cannot get

involved, we have assisted in these conversations, and hope to create better requirements to minimize these conflicts.

Schools

- Stratford/Dorothy Hamm school will be replacing trees that have died in the upcoming planting season.

Federal

- We anticipate the start of the Arlington Cemetery/Columbia Pike Realignment in the near future. This will include new tree planting.

Tree Planting:

We are finalizing planning for a fall planting of about 475 and one or two tree planting projects for Tree Stewards. We are in a dry period, weather-wise, and stress is showing, even on existing trees. We continue to do warranty checks on trees and to monitor watering routes along with Landscape staff.

We are coordinating with Green Valley Civic Association to improve tree canopy in that neighborhood. We are also coordinating with Alexandria, to share lessons learned.

Staff met with Davey Trees, the planting coordinator, to continue to improve coordination and planting practices.

Outreach:

- Finalized the project with Eden Stern, an intern testing the effectiveness of our outreach through Facebook and Instagram. We will be using the research for more effective outreach once fully staffed.
- Vincent Verweij and Melissa Gildea presented on tree pit standards and rooftop tree planting last week, at the Casey Trees Urban Tree Summit. We showed different tree planting options in urban areas, and spoke with two groups of 15+ people about how to improve tree survival through design and maintenance. Joke picture later in the email

Personnel:

- We are working to hire the three forester positions and two senior tree maintenance worker positions.

Other:

- The Tree crew helped with a public demonstration of Soil Profile Rebuilding on August 4. It appeared to be well-received, and there were good comments from developers on the applicability and feasibility of this technique.
- Vincent Verweij participated in the state's Tree conservation workgroup. It was held in Richmond, and Vincent attended virtually. The workgroup will bring forth proposals for

improvements to tree conservation codes by next Friday, for the consideration of legislators.

- Staff will be working with LDA2.0 going forward, to review single family homes for the new standards. Hopefully coordinating between grandfathered projects and new projects won't be too difficult. The new OpenCities website will have all the up to date details and requirements.

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

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Staff reported on the deer survey, which FNRC will hear at Thursday's meeting (so I won't include any spoilers). Consultants are still working on the first draft of the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan, which will likely be available sometime this fall for additional public input.

Public Spaces Master plan Implementation Advisory Group

Did not meet

Park and Recreation Commission (David Howell)

The July meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission included a briefing by Diane Probus, DPR, on a proposed memorial plaque for Mr. Larry Finch. Under new business, commissioners heard a brief overview and discussed the topic of urban bird welfare, particularly threats and how to reduce them, from window glass, light pollution, pesticides and habitat loss. This was the same topic as included in the July FNRC meeting.

The August meeting of PRC was a field trip to the Long Bridge Aquatic Center, including a tour of the pool and fitness facilities. This was a joint event with the Sports Commission. County Board liaison Takis Karatonis attended the tour.

Planning Activities Notification (Steve Sockwell)

[Commissioner Sockwell] attended a single Site Plan Review meeting, 523 S Garrison St. This is a small (7500 s.f lot) project that represents conversion of a residence to a duplex. The lot now has 10 trees or shrubs on it and the owner is proposing to replace them with 4 new ones. There was some discussion about the numbers, but the owner claims the current trees are invasive species, undersized or otherwise uninteresting and he plans to increase the tree canopy (over time) beyond the current canopy. The general tone of discussion (there were concerns about parking that might merit further talk) was that this was a relatively non controversial project.

Langston Blvd. Planning (Caroline Haynes):

After the focus on renaming Lee Highway, attention is now directed toward renaming of Old Lee Highway. Community input is being sought.
Tree Stewards (Kate Donohue)

No activities to report

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

No report

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee met on Wed., Sept. 8 (postponed for holidays) in joint session with the Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

County Planners Matt Mattauszek, Michelle Stafford, and Dean Malouff briefed the committees on the status of the Pentagon City Planning Study. As redeveloped, office space is expected to shrink and residential space expected to expand. Biophillic concepts and open green spaces are being incorporated. Designers hope to get people out of their cars to walk and cycle more, or use public transportation.

Hui Wong, Transportation Engineering and Operations Bureau Chief, briefed the committees on resetting the county's pedestrian signals from covid-era automated timers back to self-actuated timers (aka "beg buttons") at most intersections. This generated lengthy discussion.

Pamela Van Hine of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee asked for member feedback on a letter to the Board about the VDOT Route 1 re-design study. Discussion was brief because the meeting had run overtime.

Elizabeth Kiker, Bicycle Advisory Committee Chair, announced that she was stepping down, effective at the conclusion of the meeting. She suffered a serious concussion on a bicycle road trip in July and must focus on recovering. The Committee will elect a replacement at the next BAC meeting in October.

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

Next Meeting: October 28, 2021