

Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

7:00 p.m., May 27, 2021

Microsoft Teams conference meeting

Action Items and reports

Guests, Commissioners and Staff – Introductions and Sign-in

Staff: Vincent Verweij, Max Ewart, Marco Rivero, Elizabeth Carriger

Commissioners: Phil Klingelhofer, John Carey, Melody Mobley, David Howell, Evelio Rubiella, Steve Sockwell, Kate Donohue, Noreen Hannigan, Kit Norland, Bill Browning, Josh Handler

Guests: Duke Banks, Connie Fan, Bernie Berne, Judy Freshman

Public comments

Duke Banks:

Duke spoke about funding in the CIP for Gulf Branch and Long Branch Nature Center. He shared supported information through email with the commission.

Bernie Berne:

Bernie spoke about the Rosslyn Boat House, asking for the boat house to be moved or taken out of the CIP, land acquisition, and Eads St Park.

Eads St Park

Max Ewart and Marco Rivero presented on the Eads St Park.

Discussions were had about tree canopy calculations, limits to tree planting, light pollution, pathways, the 11th Street Traverse, age and condition of the conserved Cottonwood. The commission was generally in support of the project.

Public Art Master Plan Update – Elizabeth Carriger

Elizabeth Carriger presented on the Public Art Master Plan Update. Discussion followed on ephemeral, natural art, making nature part of art pieces, and the equitable approach to public art. The commission was generally in support of the project.

Tree Canopy Fund outreach – Phil Klingelhofer and Kate Donohue

Phil and Kate spoke about how to improve outreach for the Tree Canopy Fund, describing how to help find more interested parties and to increase survival.

Discussion followed on marketing, outreach to civic associations and houses of worship, statistics, the 2018 postcard campaign, tying the value of trees to dogs and shade, and resistance to planting.

Coordinate TCF and giveaway program, to help make the trees survive. Combine with other volunteers, like master gardeners, ATAG. How to get in contact with multi-family homes. Spoke with EcoAction.

2022 Legislative Priorities – Phil Klingelhofer

Phil Klingelhofer spoke about responding on legislative priorities, by July 20. John Carey compiled thoughts and a draft letter, to focus on trees and stormwater, greenhouse gas emission.

A discussion followed on what the focus should be, and whether to take on Dillon rule issues, or to focus more directly.

Vincent Verweij was asked whether he is part of the statewide tree canopy workgroup. He responded he received the invitation in May, and accepted it. This group has to come up with recommendations before November 1, 2021.

Phil Klingelhofer supported having a vote on this letter at the next meeting.

Adopt-a-Tree – Vincent Verweij

Vincent Verweij presented on the Adopt-a-tree program.

Commission Infrastructure (Work Plan, Annual Report, Memberships)

Phil Klingelhofer mentioned a conversation with Paul Gilbert, and efforts are underway for increased invasive plant work on NOVA Parks property.

Conversation followed, expressing support, clarifying the scope of the Commission in this matter, and what message helped convince NOVA Parks to move this way.

Staff Reports

Maintenance:

- Historic Preservation and Local Historic Districts are reaching out to Urban Forestry at a higher volume for tree inspections. Several dead trees have recently been approved for removal.
- The tree crew continue to receive increased requests, and are working on addressing them. Right now incoming are exceeding completed, which does not allow us to catch up. We are hoping for a reprieve, and the new fiscal year funding may help.
- Small storms have hit us in the last month, usually in the evening, with heavy, short, rain events, and heavy winds. These storms often cause 20+ tree failures for our crews.

Planning:

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

Long-term planning

- Staff continues to work on LDA2.0, to best include tree conservation in the **Chesapeake bay preservation ordinance guidance manual**, in context of reducing stormwater quantity loads.

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

New and under review:

- **Crystal City Water Park** – Staff is still working with the applicant to ensure appropriate soil volumes and tree protection methods are used for this project. The planting plan is currently under development.
- **2450 Crystal Drive (Century Center)** – Staff is working with the applicant to consider alternatives to tree impact in their design. Several staff meetings have occurred, and a public meeting was held. Staff will review and meet again in the upcoming weeks with the applicant.
- **Metropolitan Park 6/7/8** – Staff is reviewing this park for its tree planting palette, and soil volumes. A lively discussion occurred on the value of structural soils, and this park may be an experimental site for a newer structural soil product, in places where trees have enough healthy soil to thrive.
- Clarendon West Building #1 – The plans are under review and rejected. DES and Urban Forestry discovered some unusual bioretention and tree pit design that will be further discussed with the applicant to better understand their logic.
- Potomac Yard Landbay D West – Plans are in review.
- Grant Park – This plan will be presented to the Urban Forestry office in the upcoming days. Currently, the design does not show an improvement over what is already there, from a tree perspective.

- Courthouse Landmark Residential is being reviewed for planting space.

Approved and/or under construction:

- 1731 N Veitch St (Colonial Village Townhomes) – Offsite tree planting is underway, and controls on-site are in place.
- 6711 Lee Hwy – Three sets of townhomes have been approved for occupancy.
- 1735 N Lynn St (International Place) – Tree protection controls are in place and tree removal will occur soon.
- 4001 Fairfax Dr (Bright Horizons Outdoor Playground) – The preconstruction meeting was held, and the project is underway.

DES

- Sparrow Pond – A swale and trail repair has been discussed and has minimal tree impact on trees with good condition ratings.
- Crystal Substation Expansion – Project has been approved.
- Bluemont Trail at N Emerson St – Project has been approved.
- Bluemont Junction Trail – Working to minimize tree impact but responding to trail usage regarding main and secondary trail access. Project estimated start: Fall 2021.
- Army Navy Drive Complete Streets – Project has been approved.
- Donaldson Run Stream Stabilization, Phase 2 – Headwaters – Urban Forestry is working with DES and PDD on the replacement trees and the LDA will be filed in the next two weeks.
- Several intersection improvement projects, watermain replacements, and bus stop projects throughout the County were approved and/or in review. Most have very minimal tree impacts.
- Fire Station 8 will be demolishing the house on site, for the temporary fire station. 1 tree is impacted.
- **The ART Bus lot in Shirlington** is being designed. A large tree'd area will be included in the plan.

Parks

- Rosslyn Highlands – Several black gums were planted on site; however, they are being monitored for proper leaf out. They may be rejected and replanted in the fall.
- Long Bridge Aquatic Center – Several on-site trees will be deferred to the fall planting season due to contractor logistics.
- Zitkala-Sa – Tree planting will occur within the next month. The park should be completed by late June.
- Madison Manor restrooms – Construction is ongoing with minimal tree impact. Project expected to be completed by early summer.
- John Robinson Jr Town Square – Project is temporarily on hold, but it is expected to be completed by end of June.
- New Park (Teardrop) - A concept plan is being finalized. 30% review is expected within the next few months.

- Tuckahoe Playground Resurfacing – Core team met to discuss, and little tree impact is expected.
- Alcova Heights – Project is out to bid. Invasive control, under the watch of Urban Forestry and PDD, is still going well and has been successful.

By-right projects

- Staff is addressing permit violations in a handful of spaces: where sites that were formerly under 2,500 square ft have exceeded disturbance and are required to get land disturbance permits; and where tree protection measures were violated.

Schools

- The stormwater detention facility at Walter Reed school is being reviewed for tree impact. Impact remains low, but as of right now, approximately 3-4 small to medium trees may be impacted.

Federal

Tree Planting:

- Our mini Arbor Day event at Carlin Springs Elementary went very well, with a short poem reading, and tree planting. We are excited that we were still able to hold this, to look towards the future with this tree.
- Tree Planting is very busy. Melissa Gildea is marking out the remainder of the trees for planting this week and next. Davey will have four crews planting in the initial weeks of June.
- Marco-Antonio Paredes is managing temporary watering routes until we can move to the permanent spring 2021 routes Melissa is preparing. We are waiting on temporary workers.
- We are receiving some more commemorative tree planting requests this year than usual. We are trying to accommodate these as best as possible.
- National Landing BID, along with the National Cherry Blossom Festival and Amazon planted 12 cherry trees in the median of Hayes St, across from the Fashion Mall. The event was attended by BID staff, Amazon staff, and Senator Adam Ebbin. Casey Trees was employed by National Landing to perform the planting, and the event went well.

Outreach:

- Staff presented on Oak Decline to the Arlington Forest Civic Association on May 19

Personnel:

- Christina deMariano has accepted a position at Fairfax County, as part of the Forest Health division. We are excited to see Christina progress in the field of forestry, and look forward to working with her in her new position.

- We will look to hire for two foresters, including Christina's position, and the new position, in the near future.

Other:

- The Tree Canopy Fund is working on setting up a plan for the expanded tree maintenance language, approved by the board on May 15, in coordination with forestry and DES staff.
- A guidance document for planting trees near trails is being created, to minimize conflicts between trails and trees.
- Staff is researching the potential for AI-analyzed tree canopy, as a planning tool.

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

- Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)
 - No report
- Park and Recreation Commission (David Howell)

The May meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission had a very full agenda. Two presentations are also topics on tonight's FNRC agenda, including a presentation on the final design for the Eads Street "New" Park in Pentagon City and a presentation on the Public Art Master Plan final review draft.

The other items on agenda were:

- A presentation by Jon Huntley and Jesse Boeding on a CivFed paper about equity and availability of park and open space, using recently available data sources and tools from the county's open data sources. This extends previous analyses about the location and density pressures on our current park spaces for residents.
- A presentation by the Lyon Park Civic Association seeking PRC recommendation to the CB to approval a memorial plaque in Zitkala-Sa Park for Erik Gutshall. Following normal procedure, this proposal had been heard by PRC at a previous meeting and was referred to the HALRB, which voted unanimously in support of the plaque. PRC also voted unanimously to recommend that the County Board approve the proposal.
- A final presentation on the Landbay-C development project in south Crystal City. The applicant has made many adjustments to landscaping as part of the public engagement process, and most participants regard the site design and architecture favorably. However, the applicant has stated that there are no plans for bird-safe glass features, claiming that the facades do not have large windows and the risk level does not require any treatments. There are many who disagree on this point, particularly regarding the

lower floors and the roof. This project will go to the Planning Commission on June 3.

- A presentation by Bridget Obikoya, DES, on a proposed program to allow “Parklets” on Arlington streets. Parklets are small casual seating spaces, defined by planters and other barriers that convert a single parking space on a street to be converted to a mini-park. All costs are borne by applicants, and there are guidelines and specifications for construction and maintenance. No spaces will be allowed to be “active” commercial spaces, but customers of businesses could carry their purchases to a parklet to sit.

The public comment period also included a paper and comment by Duke Banks on behalf of nature center investments, which is also planned for the FNRC comment period.

- Planning Activities Notification (Steve Sockwell)

A relatively quiet month. My only participation was on a Long Range Planning committee for the Pen Place project (also known as the Amazon HQ site.) Amazon is proposing construction of three 22 story buildings, 3 shorter (2-3 story) buildings plus a conference center building. The good news is that Amazon is also offering 2.5 A. of green space and another 1 A. of area the public can use. Potential problems include the creation of a mega-block (bad for transportation patterns), somewhat blah appearance of the 22 story buildings, and questions about pedestrian circulation around the site.

From our perspective, the landscaping of the 2.5 A. green space, although varied (there's a forest and meadow area, plus a dog park and water feature,) is all about use, not presenting an experience with raw nature. I suppose it raises an issue about what one means about embracing biophilic principles. Commissioners can provide useful input on the Park Planning process, as Vincent's email suggests, and I encourage you to do so.

The leadership of the LRPC is now trying to decide whether to have more LRPC meetings or move to the SPRC phase (which will be a more detailed review.) I'll keep you informed.

- Lee Highway (Caroline Haynes)
 - No report
- Tree Stewards (Kate Donohue)
 - No report
- Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

From Elenor Hodges: I'm pleased to share a new initiative to increase participation in the Tree Canopy Fund. One of the EcoAction Arlington board members, DeShay Williams, has been organizing canvassing events to engage people in targeted neighbors in tree planting. She is looking for volunteers to help with activities for the next two weekends in Aurora Highlands. I hope you will consider volunteering. Please also help us spread the word to others who might be interested.

- Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)
 - No report
- Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Kit Norland)
 - No report
- Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (Phil Klingelhofer)
 - No report
- Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission (Teresa Leonardo)
 - No report
- Virginia Department of Forestry (Jim McGlone)
 - No report
- Arlington Public Schools (Jim Meikle)

I did want to pass along a bit of positive tree news from four of our Elementary School. We have secured a purchase order for Davey Trees to get either four or six new and/or replacement trees with a year of Maintenance and Watering at the following schools:

Abingdon Elementary School
Carlin Springs Elementary School
Long Branch Elementary School
Jamestown Elementary School

As we are well aware that our existing young trees need extra watering attention over the summer, the APS watering program starts this coming week. Our retiree William White will be returning to operate our watering truck for the summer.

- Virginia Cooperative Extension (Kirsten Ann Conrad)
 - No report

9:00 PM New Business

A discussion followed on deer data, tree canopy, and a letter to support these efforts.

A letter to urge a 10 day turnaround on deer data was proposed and voted upon. The motion failed, with 3 voting for, 6 opposed, and 1 abstention.

A letter to support funding for nature centers, and to allow for site selection with minimal tree impact for the boat house was approved to be drafted for the next meeting.

Next Meeting: June 24, 2021