

# Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

7:00 p.m., February 24, 2022

## Microsoft Teams conference meeting

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

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

Guests: Mary Glass, Jill Barker, Jacob Zielinski, Bernard Berne, DeShay Williams, Elenor Hodges, Colt Gregory

Staff: Vincent Verweij, Diego Murcia-Rojas

*Public comments:*

Alyssa Marlow spoke about the Pentagon City PDSP and concerns about equity. Vincent Verweij suggested she reach out to put her in contact with the appropriate staff.

Bernie Berne spoke about the mowing budget, and reducing funding for mowing.

Mary Glass offered support for the Civic Federation recommendations.

*Introduction of Urban Forester – Diego Murcia-Rojas*

Diego introduced himself. A question was asked about ISA certification, and the commission welcomed Diego to the team.

*Equity and the Tree Canopy Fund – EcoAction Arlington*

DeShay Williams and Jill Barker presented on equity and the Tree Canopy Fund.

David Howell had questions about grant process, oversight, and thanked the presenters.

Kit Norland thanked EcoAction and supported the movement.

A subcommittee was suggested to be formed, to discuss this proposal, in the near future.

*Priorities for the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan and County Budgets – Nat Ames*

Nat Ames and John Carey introduced the letter.

Caroline Haynes suggested adding increases to invasive management. Steve Sockwell suggested this was addressed in the budget letter. A conversation was had about the difference between the two different letters.

The letter was voted upon, and it passed.

*Strategic Investment and Stewardship Resourcing for Arlington's Natural Capital – David Howell and Kate Donohue*

After discussion, the endorsement of this paper was tabled by a vote.

*Site plan condition changes – Caroline Haynes*

The letter was voted upon, and it passed

*Notable Tree Review committee – Kate Donohue*

Kit Norland volunteered with Nat Ames to be on the subcommittee to review notable trees.

*Budget presentation – Vincent Verweij*

After presenting on the FY23 budget, a discussion included funding of Invasives, preventive maintenance, and nature center staffing.

Steve Sockwell offered to write the letter

*i-Tree Canopy – Vincent Verweij*

Due to time, this item was skipped.

*Commission Infrastructure (Work Plan, Annual Report, Memberships)*

*Staff Reports*

### **Maintenance:**

- The first and second batch of the preventive pruning program has been completed. With 60 trees pruned and 5 removed. We continue working with our 4<sup>th</sup> batch of preventive pruning in Fairlington (s Columbus St, 31<sup>st</sup> St S, and S Buchanan St). 140 trees have been worked on as part of this program already.
- The tree crew responded to a wind storm the weekend of the 19th, bringing several trees down

### **Planning:**

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

Long-term planning

- Clarendon Sector Plan: Staff reviewed the plan to improve street tree details.

#### Site plans (special exception and by-right)

- In review:
  - Bingham Center/ Silver Diner Site was discussed with county planners to communicate the concerns of the agency about tree protection and species selection. During the review, it was pointed out that multiple mature trees can be conserved and there is no need for removal.
  - Planning work continues on 2608 Shirlington Road UCMUD housing. Staff is working for more tree planting in front and on structure due to limited at grade planting space.
  - Wendy's/2025 Clarendon Blvd: Staff reviewed the most recent submission. All tree canopy is met on streetscape, and comments were focused on making that space as good as possible.
  - Potomac Yard Landbay C East: A realignment of Potomac Ave may impact willow oaks in the median. Staff is investigating ways to avoid this impact, or plan for future planting space along the realigned road
  - Pen Place: Staff is reviewing the Park Master Plan for tree conservation and planting.
- Approved/under construction:
  - Crystal City Water Park: Staff met the developer to clarify tree conservation methods and paver removal, and everything is installed correctly.

#### DES

- There are two major outfall projects in the NW, one in the design phase at N Quebec street and one in the construction phase on N Randolph Street. Staff is working with DES to save trees on the perimeter and to communicate tree preservation concerns affected by expansion of the limits of work beyond the limits of disturbance.
- Sparrow Pond reconstruction drawings are nearing approval and may offer an opportunity for reforestation efforts.
- Staff inspected a tree on the Stream Restoration project at Donald's Run, where he inspected a tree that was affected by construction. The tree was approved for removal and tree replacement will take place once construction is completed.

#### Parks

- Initial DPR meeting on project briefing on Bell Street Park. Higher park utilizing is being requested for pedestrians and a proposed bike lane. Multiple small trees will need to be relocated off-site as the trees were recently planted a season ago.

- DPR members met on a project briefing on 23rd and Eads. The purpose of improvement at this intersection is to make the space safer, more illuminated by maintaining public usage (seating). Two proposed removals are pending DPR approval.
- Glencarlyn Bridge Replacement: a final site inspection took place before the installation of the bridge.
- Nauck Town center: an internal punch list walk took place. The walk was in anticipation of the park's inauguration later this spring. The site is still pending tree planting and will take place over the next couple of weeks.

### By-right projects

- Staff reviewed 84 plans, and provided a final inspection on 14 projects
- 313 N Fillmore St and 4523 N Valley St are currently in-violation, and mitigation is being addressed. These violations are starting a conversation on how to better handle neighbor tree impact, as neighbors often suffer from adjacent development projects, where their trees may be affected so much, it may be an effective removal. The forestry team is working on addressing this issue.

### Schools

- No major school updates

### Federal

- No major Federal updates

### **Tree Planting:**

- The tree planting coordinator found space for 254 trees for the 2022 spring planting season.
- Staff started planning a volunteer tree planting event at Fort Scott Park. Interested volunteers can come help us plant 37 native trees on 9 April
- Started the process for an Arbor Day planting on 22 April at Taylor Elementary School.

### **Outreach:**

- Staff attended the Fairlington President's meeting, to discuss the preventive maintenance program and other items. It was well-received, and we will continue to work to improve the street trees of Fairlington with this program.
- A short presentation with Lyon Park was held on Wednesday 9, followed by a Q&A.

- Staff attended a discussion with EcoAction Arlington to improve equity in tree planting in their projects. \_

**Personnel:**

- The tree crew supervisor is preparing the Skills test and questions for the upcoming Tree Maintenance Worker interviews. \_

**Other:**

- Tree Stewards are working with the county on a structural pruning for young trees. The effort is in early stages but we hope it will increase the safety of our tree canopy as these young trees mature.

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

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Wayne Savage, Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Light Pollution, Sierra Club D.C. Chapter and Steering Committee Member, DC Chapter, International Dark-Sky Association presented on light pollution and Dark-sky policies and practices in our region. There will likely be an opportunity to include light pollution recommendations in the FNRP, and this presentation focused on successes and best practices in other communities.

Park and Recreation Commission (David Howell)

The February meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission included a conversation with board member Takis Karatonis on commission interests and priorities as well as a presentation by Matt Ewing (DPR) on the county manager's proposed FY 2023 budget for the department. In addition, Adrienne Fine, Assistant County Attorney, presented on the Virginia FOIA laws, and how they pertain to documents and activities, including the open meeting provisions that pertain to commission meetings and communications. The presentations as well as the meeting video are available on the PRC web page.

Public Spaces Master Plan Implementation Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

No meeting in February we did have a meeting with Gillian Burgess, the replacement representative from the Bicycle Advisory Committee to the Natural Trails working group, Gillian was not familiar with the reports that the previous representative, Elizabeth Kiker, had made to BAC. The contract for conducting an inventory of existing natural trails has been let and they hope to have data collection completed sometime later this spring/early summer

Planning Activities/SPRC (Steve Sockwell and Caroline Haynes)

Pentagon City Sector Plan: The County Board adopted the sector plan at its February 12 meeting. Over 100 speakers from the River House spoke against the plan during the meeting, objecting to the proposed increase in density on the surface parking lots at River House and claiming that they had not been aware of the 18-month long planning process. This contrasted with the other speakers who had participated in the process (including me as FNRC rep) who spoke strongly in favor of the plan.

PenPlace: The final SPRC was held on Feb. 10 focusing on community benefits and wrap up. SPRC members were generally pleased with the plans for the Community Highschool on the site, as well as other changes that have been made during the planning process. There continued to be opposition to the lack of a dedicated bike lane on 12th Street, but that is an issue more with the county than with the applicant.

1300 and 1305 N. Pierce Street (Marbella Apartments) Adopted by the County Board on Feb. 12.

Pen Place Park Master Plan: Waiting for updates based on Dec. community engagement.

#### Langston Highway (Caroline Haynes)

No new updates.

#### Tree Stewards (Noreen Hannigan)

Tree Stewards have begun their Winter 2022 Training classes, which will go until March 27. Among the roster of illustrious speakers and field trip leaders are the FNRC's own Vincent Verweij, Kate Donohue, and Jim McGlone. Tree Stewards has invited the TS membership as a whole to listen in on the Zoom classes and earn Continuing Education hours. In addition, classes are recorded and uploaded to TS's own training-class YouTube channel, which trainees and members can subscribe to.

#### Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

There will be 173 native trees planted in Arlington this spring through the Tree Canopy Fund. Commissioners Phil Klingelhofer, Noreen Hannigan, Nat Ames, and myself participated in the review process with Julia of EcoAction Arlington and County staff Diego Murcia-Rojas and Jose Portuhondo.

This is a preliminary count of the species requested:

Species	Requested
Diospyros virginiana - American persimmon	24
Nyssa sylvatica - Black gum	30
Asimina triloba - Pawpaw	22
Carya glabra - Pignut hickory	13
Fagus grandifolia - American beech	3
Ulmus americana - American elm	9
Platanus occidentalis - American sycamore	9
Quercus rubra - Red oak	14
Quercus coccinea - Scarlet oak	18
Quercus bicolor - Swamp white oak	9
Liquidambar styraciflua - Sweetgum	1
Quercus alba - White oak	12
Quercus phellos - Willow oak	9
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>173</b>
Betula nigra - River birch (need extra from Fall)	1
Quercus palustris - Pin oak (need extra from Fall)	1

A trip to White House Natives in Luray to tag trees is scheduled for Thursday, March 3.

#### Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee met on Monday, Feb. 7, 2022. Ryan Delaney, Principal Planner for Natural Surface Trails, provided an overview of the County's plans for evaluating natural trails in parks and how the public-engagement process will go as they update the Master Plan. Mr. Delaney said that a contractor will be taking an inventory of natural trails and that they will be assessed as to their condition, viability, sustainability, etc., and that the public will have opportunities to express their interests and comments. His talk was well received (after controversy in Dec. and Jan. as to whether the BAC was being included/respected by County staff). In addition, Bob Upton who oversees County-owned paved trail maintenance, answered questions as to how repairs and snow treatment/removal are handled. Paul Mounier (Transit Planner, DES) presented information about "Floating Bus Island Designs" and the pros and cons of them. He said one of the main questions is how to route bicycle lanes around them without causing collisions with disabled bus passengers as they approach the doors of the bus from the main sidewalk. (Floating Bus Islands can be seen on p. 22 of this publication: [https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Projects/Documents/DES-Bus-Stop-2020-03-17-FINAL\\_Guidelines\\_and\\_Standards.pdf](https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/Projects/Documents/DES-Bus-Stop-2020-03-17-FINAL_Guidelines_and_Standards.pdf).) Two remaining agenda items had to be postponed for lack of time (Maintenance Of Traffic reporting system for when sidewalks or trails are blocked by construction activity, and a Master Plan Bike Element update). These will be covered at the March meeting.

#### Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Vacant)

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)

We are delighted that Taylor ES has been chosen for the Arbor Day Tree Planting Ceremony.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Kirsten Ann Conrad)

No report

New Business

Melody Mobley mentioned her recognition at the Virginia Assembly

**Next Meeting:        March 24, 2022**