

Urban Forestry Commission
July 27, 2017
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Nora Palmatier, Chair
John Carey
Patricia Norland
Steve Campbell
Brian Keene
Evelio Rubiella
Paul Campanella
David Howell, PRC

State and County Staff

Brian Keightley, DPR Liaison
Vincent Verweij, DPR
Christopher Willett, DPR

Guests

Joan Loepker
Zach Duncan
Sherry Frear

Public Comment

Zach Duncan, a local Boy Scout, made a statement about the value of Arlington's forests and how much he and his troop value them.

DPR Bioretention and Stormwater Program – Chris Willett, DPR

Chris Willett, an environmental management specialist with DPR, gave a presentation on how stormwater facilities are maintained on DPR land.

The presentation was followed by technical questions, and a discussion of trees and how they fit into the stormwater program.

Single Family Homes Development – Nora Palmatier

A short description of the typical development process for a single-family home was given by Vincent Verweij. This process was described from the initial application, through to the Certificate of Occupancy.

Nora Palmatier asked for a UFC member to research this process.

John Carey and Kit Norland expressed interest in researching the topic.

Plan for Our Public Spaces (POPS) Update – Caroline Haynes

Item tabled until October meeting.

Other Business

A letter addressing the Lubber Run Community Center was approved unanimously to include:

- a) prioritizing the preservation of high value trees on the project site and between the proposed center and Lubber Run Park
- b) moving the proposed community center building closer to North Park Street to minimize the intrusion of the building into the adjacent natural areas of the park

- c) if shifting footprint is not feasible, then shrinking the west wing of the proposed building and moving that square footage to the south wing should be considered

Evelio Rubiella to draft letter for the Chair to submit to the board.

Approval of June Minutes

The June minutes were approved unanimously.

Staff reports

- Tree Canopy Study update
 - Staff is moving forward with getting a quote for an updated tree canopy study
- Lubber Run Community Center Update
 - A discussion followed this update, to approve a letter asking to move the building to spare more trees.
 - Evelio Rubiella volunteered to draft and send the letter.
- Upcoming Park Projects
- DED treatment at Oakland Park
- Storm/Large Tree Removal Update
 - Nora Palmatier asked for an update on the large volume of tree removals

Vincent Verweij – Acting Urban Forest Manager

Tree removal:

1. We are getting a very high volume of tree removal requests, most of which are legitimate. Leftover dying ash trees, oaks struggling with the climate, and other impacts like the heavy storms of the last two weeks have swamped our crew. We are handling it, for now, but some lower priority work may take a back seat until we catch up.

Tree planting:

1. Our planting staff is looking for sites, and scheduling planting for the fall. A majority of trees will be going in parks, with coordination of the park managers.

DES:

1. Old Dominion Drive: planting is completed. Will be replacing some dead trees this fall, but survival is encouraging. Watering most likely played a part in high survival rate.
2. A water main break at Spout Run Pkwy will require the removal of 15 small-to-medium trees. As this is on public land, and in the RPA, these will be replaced after the main is fixed.
3. Presented for DES-sustainability on common forestry issues and questions. DES staff often work around trees, and this talk helped answer their concerns.

Site plans:

1. Red Cross, along Arlington Blvd and Trenton St: Working with the applicant to reduce impact to trees, and to find spaces for replacement trees on other affordable housing properties, owned by the applicant. Impact is moderate, but tree replacements add up over 100.
2. Virginia Hospital Center: The VHC is planning to build a new section and parking garage along 19th and George Mason Drive, after swapping land with Arlington County. Current proposed plans show significant tree removal, and draft replacement plan.

3. 6711 Lee Hwy: Continuing to advocate for preservation of adjacent park trees to this project. Provided comments to the applicant to find a solution to keep their project at proposed size, and preserve the trees.
4. Ballston Quarter: Working with the applicant to finalize the streetscape design. It's looking like a great project for the trees planted. Structural cells and stormwater tree pits are some of the more modern aspects of this project.
5. Columbia Village Center (at George Mason and Columbia Pk): This project is starting demolition, and will be removing trees in the near future.

By-right projects:

1. Continuing to see a moderate volume of single-family homes. Nora provided the quarterly reports, but since the last UFC meeting, 8 new projects were submitted.
2. Large subdivisions are coming in at a higher rate, with subdivisions in Nauck and Westover proposing significant tree removals.

Parks:

1. Benjamin Banneker: Attended public meetings and staff meetings. Working to address concerns about high numbers of dead ash trees, and to minimize impact to existing trees and woodlands.
2. South Park: Final design presented. Will increase tree canopy along the edge of Four Mile Run, at Potomac Yard.
3. Bluemont Park: finalized planting. This is a great example of what a forest buffer will look like right after project completion.
4. Lubber Run Community Center: Attended staff meetings on this project. Provided suggestions on how trees can be better preserved with the project.

Schools:

1. Wilson School: Approved landscape plan and civil engineering plan. Had to work with APS to increase soil volume for trees on roofs, to prevent trees from being merely ornamental. Reached a good compromise last week.
2. TJ Elementary/Fleet Elementary: Demo of the site started. Working with the applicant on the landscape plan to reduce conflicts and ensure significant soil volume
3. Trailers: working with APS to minimize impact to trees from trailer installation, and replacing trees where impact is too great. APS is replacing trees at a higher replacement rate than required.
4. Ashlawn: I am assisting APS staff to alleviate an erosion issue near this school. Planting and access restriction will likely be a solution to this problem.

Planning:

1. CPHD and urban forestry worked together to streamline the landscape documents, which guide development in the county. Hopefully this will make applicants' and our lives easier in review. I will send this around once completed.

Urban forest conference:

1. I spoke with Michelle Kondo, of the US Forest Service, who appears interested in presenting at the conference in November. Her focus will be on green retrofit projects, installing landscape to improve health and reduce crime, and her research from that.

Staff changes:

1. Lois Barb, our tree planting coordinator, will be retiring at the end of August. We will be having a staff retirement party for her, but if you have anything to pass along to her, let me know. Her position will be posted soon.

Other:

1. Cartegraph work order system is being tested by staff. This will hopefully streamline tree maintenance and planting efforts.
2. ISA conference is next week. I, Marco Antonio-Paredes, Brett Wallace, and tree crew member Walton Duckett will be attending, to learn more about research and new technology.
3. I will be helping ISA and Alexandria with a walk through downtown Alexandria, talking to arborists and interested people about urban tree survival. This is an Alexandria-led walk, and Arlington will be helping to work with the ISA conference.
4. Presented for the National Recreation and Parks association on trees and health in Arlington County. Unfortunately not available for the public, unless you are an NRPA member.
5. I walked with the tree crew to provide a tree ID refresher, and speak to them about risk assessment. Almost all of the tree crew attended.

Brian Keightley – Deputy Division Chief, Parks and Natural Resources

Management and Operations

- Working with county purchasing to rebid the tree planting contract. Current contract with Davey Tree has been extended three months to October 31st.
- Working with County financing on a proper contract vehicle to bid a Canopy Study.
- Tree planting complete with Davey, 445 trees planted.
- Lois Barb, tree planting coordinator, will be retiring on August 30, 2017. We have had a staff member shadowing Lois for several months to help us fill the knowledge gap until we can hire her replacement.
- Tree planting coordinator position will be opened through the competitive hiring process within the next 2-3 weeks.
- Working DES staff to plan for the negotiations to revise the MS4 permit conditions this fall, one of which is trees planted per year on public property.
- Implementation of FY18 on started on July 1, working with unit managers to plan programs and initiatives for the next year.

Other Notable Updates

- Working with Tree Stewards to possibly apply for a grant for tree planting at Bluemont Park through the Neighborwoods Program.
- Working with ACE to evaluate possible revision to the Tree Canopy Fund.
- Working with staff on DPR legislative priorities for Environmental Operations, including forestry and natural resources.

- Brian Keightley took the County's tree crew to Green Industry Day at American University on July 20. Practical knowledge and BBQ was had by all.

Commission Member Reports (provided in advance by email unless otherwise noted)

Park and Recreation Commission – Caroline Haynes

No report

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group – Caroline Haynes

No Report

Planning activities (vacant)

No report

Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (Nora Palmatier)

No report – did not meet in July

Four Mile Run Valley Visioning – Nora Palmatier

I was out of town for the public meeting last week so no report. The Dog Park Committee next meets Aug. 3, walk thru 630 and meeting 7 PM.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier

Tree problems continue with several having died. Several of us are looking into prepurchasing better tree stock so we don't run into this problem next time. Steve Campbell has been checking on the reported problems.

Meeting

Northern Virginia Urban Forest Roundtable – Nora Palmatier

Meeting on July 13 considered the problem of what to do with urban wood since more wood comes down from urban forests than from national forests. A local "mobile sawyer" shared his experiences getting wood, and making it a business instead of a hobby would be difficult. Local jurisdictions are talking about how to better the situation from simply mulching or wood chipping. Arlington County sent representative with experience. Fall conference will be Nov. 9, Algonquin Regional Park, topic is how trees increase human health. Vincent Verweij is on planning committee.

Single Family Homes – Nora Palmatier

Second quarter reports are not up yet. The website is very useful to see what's happening development wise in Arlington. <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/data-research/development/quarterly-tracking-report/>

Public Facilities Review Committee

No report

Ordinance Adjustments for Tree Preservation – Nora Palmatier

No report

Rosslyn Highlands Park – Steve Campbell

No report

Tree Stewards – Steve Campbell

1. Tree Stewards continue to assist in the Tree Canopy Fund process by inspecting this year's problem plantings;
2. Next month Tree Stewards will begin to survey and assess the 1,300 trees planted in previous years of the TCF program;
3. Tree Stewards will be applying to the Tree Canopy Fund for an education grant to develop a campaign that will inform the public on how to better protect and care for the mature trees on their property.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Commission – Phil Klingelhofer

On July 13, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) held its monthly meeting, with one significant item on the agenda:

Discussion / Action Items

- Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Map Update, Christin Jolicoeur, Sr. Watershed Projects Manager – This presentation is the same as given at a UFC meeting earlier in the year. A copy of the presentation is attached,

I have attached a list of all the NC neighborhoods and the projects each of those neighborhoods have in our proposed project queue, as well as the draft minutes from the June NCAC meeting. There will be no NCAC meeting in August. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Public Spaces Master Plan

No report

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (Kimberly Fedinatz)

No report

Virginia Department of Forestry – Jim McGlone

We have been getting reports of Variable Oakleaf Caterpillar from down state. If you discover any activity in Arlington or elsewhere, please let me know so I can map it for DOF. We are trying to get an idea of the extent of the outbreak.

Arlington Public Schools – Jim Meikle

No report

Virginia Cooperative Extension – Kirsten Buhls

No report

New Business

What's the reality of stormwater credit for trees and forests?

No formal meeting in August, but traditionally the UFC has done an informal walk through the woods but conducts no official business.

Next Meeting

September 28, 2017 – Courthouse Plaza, Room 311