

Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

7:00 p.m., June 24, 2021

Microsoft Teams conference meeting

Action Items and reports

Guests, Commissioners and Staff – Introductions and Sign-in

Public comments

Bernie Berne spoke in opposition about the boat house location and asked to remove funding from the CIP

Audrey Clement spoke in opposition about the boat house location and asked to remove funding from the CIP.

Capital Improvement Plan – Erik Beach

Erik Beach presented on the Capital Improvement Plan

A motion was made to write a letter to use the boat house as support to leverage acquisition elsewhere, as well as a request to be involved in the planning process.

The motion passed.

Conservation code comparison – Vincent Verweij

Vincent Verweij presented on the comparison between the conservation and replacement code. John Carey spoke about a potential project comparing GIS between 2008 and 2016.

Preventive Pruning Pilot Project – Vincent Verweij

A presentation was made by Vincent Verweij, on the new funding for preventive pruning. Commissioners discussed how to prioritize this funding, and what success means.

Discussion and Approval of Letters – Phil Klingelhofer

The 2022 Legislative letter, CIP, and Budget letters were approved.

Commission Infrastructure (Work Plan, Annual Report, Memberships)

Minutes were approved unanimously. This was in lieu of a video, which had not recorded correctly for the May meeting.

Staff Reports

Maintenance:

- May saw the most tree maintenance requests of the year so far, with 136 requests in the month. June is likely to match or exceed this. Staff and contractors are working to address this workload.
- Staff is creating a plan for preventive pruning, with new funding available, in fiscal year 2022

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.
- Staff walked with planning commissioners and county staff in Pentagon City, to identify opportunities for biophilic design, as part of the Pentagon City PDSP. The project is looking for a “green ribbon” to go across PC, and the group helped identify potential locations.

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. Additionally, species selection will be revised, and current tree placement is not appropriate in certain areas given the proposed uses.
- **Marbella Apartments (1300 N Pierce St)** – A new site plan project in Fort Myer Heights. Current impacts for this project appear to be fairly high, with no on-site conservation.
- Metropolitan Park 6/7/8 – Staff reviewed this park for its tree planting palette, and soil volumes.
- 1201 N Vernon St – Duplexes – Plan is under review but is nearing completion.
- Westmont Shopping Center – Two trees to be saved will now be removed due to overhead utility conflicts. Dominion will be performing the removals at their cost.

- The Wendy's lot in Courthouse is being reviewed for a revived site plan. No significant impact to trees exists, and due to the strange shape of the property lines, all tree canopy is met through street trees.
- Courthouse Landmark Residential – Staff is reviewing street tree planting and soil volumes. Care is being taken to avoid impact to the memorial trees on Courthouse Square.

Approved and/or under construction:

- 1735 N Lynn St (International Place) – Tree protection controls are in place and tree removal is complete.
- 4001 Fairfax Dr (Bright Horizons Outdoor Playground) – The project is underway and should conclude in the upcoming weeks.
- 1420 S Rolfe St – A preconstruction meeting was held, and the project is underway.
- 2001 S Clark St – A preconstruction meeting was held to go over tree protection before demo. Demo will not occur for several more weeks.
- 1555 Wilson Blvd – Final inspections are being performed for this site.

DES

- Sparrow Pond – A swale and stormwater repair option has been approved by DPR and plans will be developed for review.
- Clark – Bell Extension – 90% plans and the first LDA were submitted. The plan is still not approved.
- 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.
- A small stormwater feature is being added to the North Salt Dome. Impact is being reviewed.

Parks

- Rosslyn Highlands – New trees on site have bounced back with the cooler weather and regular watering.
- Zitkala-Sa – Tree planting will occur within the next week. The park should now be completed by late July.
- Jennie Dean – Site deconstruction is progressing. All trees are being adequately protected.
- Long Bridge – Remaining site trees will be planted in October.
- Lubber Run Bridge Replacement – The core team met to discuss options for replacement. A consensus could not yet be reached. More to come.
- Glencarlyn Bridge Replacement – The core team will be reviewing 90% plans in the coming weeks. Tree impact is low.

- Towers – The park will go out to bid shortly. Due to costs associated with the Pandemic, some play equipment had to be altered. Tree impact is still very low.

By-right projects

- Staff is handling regular workloads of by-right plans. No violations this month, but follow-up on existing violations are still outstanding.

Schools

- Walter Reed school is finishing up tree planting. They are watering every day, to help deal with higher temperatures

Federal

- No major projects.

Tree Planting:

- Tree planting was completed on 6/21 and the tree planting coordinator is working on Final acceptance.
- About 590 trees were planted this spring, compared to the 630 scheduled. Tree availability was a problem, with some species sold out.
- Planting was complicated by labor supply shortages which resulted in delayed shipments and the need to bring in crews from Ohio to plant.
- Watering is ongoing, although short-staffed. We are working on improving efficiency to balance the shortage of labor. We are hoping to be up to full staff in two weeks or so.

Outreach:

- Eden Stern, a student of University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, is helping pilot the Arlington Forestry Instagram account. We are seeing how much engagement we can get with this form of outreach. You can find it here:
<https://www.instagram.com/arlingtonforestry/>

Personnel:

- **Adam Lipera** will be leaving Arlington County for a promotion at Fairfax County. We are excited to see him progress in his career. Unfortunately it leaves us with only 1 forester right now, but we are seeking to hire 3 foresters as soon as we are able. Look for the first postings on July 2.
- The tree crew will get more strata in their positions, with the creation of a Senior Tree Maintenance Worker, with the intent to improve management and coordination with our tree maintenance needs.

Other:

- Forestry staff helped teach the Park Corps team, helping improve parks with this team by spreading wood chips, removing invasive plants, and teaching them about jobs in the parks field.

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

- Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

We heard from Gabrielle Cantor, Chair of the Environmental and Climate Justice Committee Arlington NAACP #7047, on Planning for Equitable Access to Natural Resources. The discussion focused on how we can best incorporate equity policies and metrics into the update of the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan (FNRP), including programs such as the Tree Canopy Fund.

Commissioners also reviewed a very preliminary outline of the proposed structure of the FNRP, which will mirror the structure of the Public Spaces Master Plan, and seek to coordinate with other adopted county plans.

- Park and Recreation Commission (David Howell)

The Park and Recreation Commission met virtually on June 22, with the following agenda items:

1. CIP-Erik Beach presented an overview of the CIP proposal for DRP. The slides are available on the PRC web page, and the content is likely the same as will be heard by FNRC tonight.
2. Boathouse proposal overview-Paul Holland and Erik Meyers discussed the current status of the proposed Rosslyn boathouse, including the CIP funding, private funding, site challenges and benefits of enhancing river access for non-powered watercraft, as well as others. Slides available on the PRC webpage.
3. NVCT-Alan Rowsome, Executive Director, presented an overview of the mission, activities, challenges and plans of the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. NVCT works to acquire land and also to assist landowners, to create conservation easements that restrict development potential of designated

parcels into the future, thus setting these areas aside as unavailable for future development. Slides on the PRC webpage.

4. Pershing Drive GLUP-Margaret Rhodes, CPHD, presented a summary and status report on the General Land Use Plan for the developed area around the intersection of Pershing Drive and Rt 50, prior to development of a final draft plan to be presented to the County Board, anticipated for next month. No individual site plan proposals have been submitted at this time, but the Planning Commission expects redevelopment in this area. Since the area does not fall under a current sector plan, a special GLUP will, when approved, govern the standards for all development in the area, such as traffic patterns, setbacks and height limits, open space, planting and biophilic design. Slides on the PRC web page.

- Planning Activities Notification (Steve Sockwell)

No activity to report. On the two major projects I'm following, the Clarendon Sector Plan update has a Long Range Meeting set for June 30. However, the topics (historic preservation, use mix) don't seem relevant to FNRC expertise. On the Penn Place project (Amazon HQ) things have been quiet. There is a scheduled Long Range meeting for July 13, but no other info. Since there are a number of large issues outstanding, I may have something interesting to report next month.

- Lee Highway (Caroline Haynes)

The County Board is slated to vote during the July County Board meeting on the renaming of Lee Highway to Langston Boulevard, named for John M Langston, who was an abolitionist, and in the 1880's became the first Black congressman elected in Virginia.

Over the past several months, the planning team held five neighborhood meetings focused on different land use scenarios for five different sections of Lee Highway. I only attended one of the sessions, where much of the discussion focused on concerns about the trade offs of creating more walkable neighborhood amenities, and the need to add more residential density along the corridor to make this feasible. There was some reference to the need for more green spaces along these corridors but the points of contention are focused on parking, density, traffic flow through the area, upzoning, missing middle housing, etc. Staff and consultants are now working on preferred concept plans for each of these areas, with the plan to share these with the community in the fall of 2021.

- Tree Stewards (Kate Donohue)

TSAA plans on providing training to a new class of Tree Stewards this coming January. Details to follow.

Tree Stewards removed the arbor ties from the trees planted at Lubber Run Community Center

Tree Stewards assisted in removing tree tubes from saplings in Benjamin Banneker Park.

Tree Stewards pruned trees at Chestnut Hills Park.

Tree Stewards provided consultations by request to residents interested in applying for trees through the Tree Canopy Fund.

- Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

Truth in Advertising: We learned that the common name "Sugarberry" refers to *Celtis laevigata*, rarely available in commerce. The species offered by the TCF is *Celtis occidentalis*, common name "Hackberry". We will correct our materials when this species is offered again.

Volunteers from Eco-Action Arlington, TSAA, and others participated in canvassing the Halls Hill and Aurora Highlands neighborhoods to promote the TCF. These events are coordinated by DeShay Williams, board member of EcoAction Arlington.

The deadline for applying for trees is midnight, June 25.

- Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

(1) The Chair of the BAC mentioned that she participated in a meeting with the Implementation Committee of the Public Spaces Master Plan, which is evaluating mountain biking in Arlington with a series of discussions, and that the Implementation Committee will be doing a thorough evaluation in the next few months. (Because of a very full agenda and multiple speakers waiting to present that evening, there was no time to open the floor to questions. I will report more info as it becomes available.)

(2) There was a presentation by Robert Capper, Capital Asset Manager with Arlington DPR, on proposed FY 2022-2024 CIP projects dealing with the Trails and Bridges Modernization

Program. The proposals are scheduled to be presented to the County Board for approval in July. Proposed plans include:

Repairs to the following off-street trails and pedestrian bridges/low-water fords (which in some cases will involve deepening the underlayments of some connector ramps which are currently just asphalt lying directly on soil, and bringing bridges into ADA compliance (ramps instead of steps, etc.):

- Trail work (milling and paving): Bluemont Junction, Bluemont Trail north of Rt. 50, part of Lucky Run Trail, and Colonial Village Trail.
- Pedestrian bridge & low-water fords replacement/repair: Glencarlyn and Lubber Run (FY 2022), Bluemont Bridge and Alcova Heights (FY 2023)

In addition, a study is beginning this summer on future bridge replacements and repairs.

- 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)

Besides the 20 new trees recently planted, we have been doing pruning with JL Tree Service. They did a wonderful job on pruning four large Willow Oaks around the original entrance of Barrett Elementary School in N. Henderson Rd.

Thanks to County's Melissa Gildea generous advice and expertise with our new and older trees. I mentioned him last month but thanks also to William White who has returned from retirement to help water our newest APS trees.

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

9:00 PM New Business

Next Meeting: July 22, 2021