
**MEETING MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL-ONLY
ARLINGTON COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

January 16, 2024

The **Park and Recreation Commission** convened its meeting at **7:00 p.m.** on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024.**

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY)	PRC Chair, Commissioner Jill Barker Commissioner Nelson Dimpter Commissioner Dean Foster PRC Vice Chair, Shruti Kuppa Commissioner Mark Lincoln Commissioner Claire Pascoello Commissioner Adam Rasmussen Commissioner Alex Sanders Commissioner Gary Shinnars At-large Commissioner Nia Bagley, Planning Commission At-large Commissioner Gerald Brandt, Arlington Public Schools At-large Commissioner Lizzy Stell, Sports Commission
ABSENT	Commissioner Sarah Baryluk Commissioner Gretchen Hickey Commissioner Neal Hunter Commissioner Melissa Riggio
STAFF	Marco Rivero, DPR, PRC Staff Liaison Gregory Anselene, DPR Michael Cullen, DPR Bill Eger, CMO
PUBLIC COMMENTERS	None
OTHER ATTENDEES	None

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- [Link to Teams Recording](#)
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SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Chair's Introduction and Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

- *Commission consideration of the December 12 minutes.*
- *The minutes were adopted as prepared with no objections.*

Public Comment

** Park and Recreation Commission public comment is open to all with a 3-minute limit per person.*

No public comment was provided at this time.

Presentation and Discussion with the Arlington County Climate Policy and Coordination Chief

Bill Eger, CMO provided a discussion on his role as the County's Climate Policy and Coordination Chief (Climate Policy Officer), as well as the initiatives he is coordinating and how to best support the PRC and other County commissions in this role.

The PRC discussion included the role of the Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) now that the new Forestry and Natural Resources Plan (FNRP) was adopted in December 2023. Mr. Eger detailed that whether the NRJAG continues in its role or a modified role, the County Board may need to consider that further and decide on the Group's role(s). Another item discussed was potentially elevating the County's Community Energy Plan (CEP) to a larger Climate Action Plan (CAP). Integration with public health, education, public safety and other areas where a comprehensive CAP can interact with requires further discussion (cross departmentally and Countywide). Mr. Eger detailed that looking at what a CAP can accomplish and how that relates to the community's well-being and broader planning efforts will require further discussions.

Formalization of processes for climate action is needed. Once climate policy (more comprehensive climate policy) is detailed, it can be championed further with the County's land acquisition goals and needs. Mr. Eger acknowledged the challenge for further land acquisition opportunities and potentially how this would be integrated with the County's overall climate goals (this would require further discussion in the future). Another topic identified is future budgetary goals/prioritization. Mr. Eger recognized the challenges regarding budget allocations Countywide and that this will need further discussion with the County Manager's and County Board's offices. Providing core services is important (waste management, public safety, schools, etc.) and will determine how other monetary resources are used to fulfill the County's various goals (including advancing further climate goals). This affects not only the County operating budget but also the capital budget which is up for review as well. Racial and social equity goals will be reviewed as well and aligned with other County goals as well. Further considerations to stormwater management are also important for any new climate goals coming forward (including advocating for continued, tree preservation activities).

Mr. Eger detailed that one of his major priorities is to coordinate and engage with each of the County departments to acknowledge challenges and opportunities for growth for climate policies. This includes leveraging similarities and alignments in ideas and policies for greater and collective action. Prioritizing CEP implementation efforts, working through legislative processes, and rolling out a more comprehensive climate action framework moving forward, especially as it relates to advancing race and equity relationships. Mr. Eger identified potentially having quarterly check-ins with the PRC to advance further discussions.

Presentation and Discussion on the Athletic Field Availability Project

Gregory Anselene, DPR provided a presentation and discussion on the County's Athletic Field Availability Project. This included the work with the Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC).

The PRC discussion included tracking field use from people who are unable to do so, especially as DPR is working on efficiencies and an application (app) that may track the usage as well. Mr. Anselene acknowledged that the app could potentially be linked to the field use calendar that exists and provide the necessary data to acknowledge what is occurring in real time. There is no built-in strategy within the app or elsewhere to track who is unable to use various fields. PRC Chair Barker detailed that potentially having a waiting list for use and tracking that may be helpful.

Acknowledging the use of athletic fields for “non-athletic purposes” (within the study done, 20% of users acknowledged this). Mr. Anselene detailed these uses can be flying a kite, picnicking, or other uses that are not considered “athletic”. However, there is the issue of potentially using these athletic fields for walking dogs (which should not be done) because of safety and sanitary factors associated with this. Mr. Anselene also described that the data collected will be used to track how efficiently the fields may be used for various activities. Non-profit/for-profit groups using the athletic fields may present conflicts. Mr. Anselene noted that the Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) that exist with these groups are in the process of being reviewed comprehensively and will be coordinated accordingly with what is occurring with the implementation methods through this study (availability for community and scheduled use as well). Another question raised is how to use athletic fields in areas where mixed-use communities exist for various activities and using evidence-based approaches to this analysis is appreciated.

The breakdown by race noted in the presentation was discussed; Mr. Anselene acknowledged that online and in-person pop-up opportunities (at a wide variety of locations) provide potential opportunities for community feedback from individuals that may not participate in traditional engagement opportunities (participation data was collected by zip code). Community use of drop-in fields and scheduling confusions was something that was addressed through this study and provide further opportunities at various locations throughout the County for community use. One issue detailed was the shutdown/lockdown of restroom facilities at various locations earlier in the day during the winter. Would this affect how community members use these fields? Mr. Anselene discussed that some athletic fields would provide for various expanded opportunities for community use and where to schedule further throughout the County (may provide for expanded restroom hours, but that may still be an issue based on the facilities themselves and if heat is provided). Will there be some way of tracking utilization of non-competitive team uses and fair access to these groups? Mr. Anselene explained that this will be piloted with a certain number of organizations and track their uses/rates accordingly and will be the first step to see how to best track future measures for expanded/efficient uses of athletic fields.

Check-in processes were explained further (through the app) but using staff resources to do this would not be efficient (unless staffing increases). Mr. Anselene detailed that the app will be able to scan a QR code to check-in to various facilities and track usage. This will first be introduced through a pilot system to see if this will work in the long run (or opportunities for adjustments to increase efficiencies). Working with coaches and other group leaders to ensure use of the app and QR codes is important. Finally, staff should consider how the use of this new technology will parallel the current use of RecTrac and field reservations as they exist today. Including a link to the athletic fields webpages to the real-time usages would be helpful. Added signage at the athletic fields may help as well. Mr. Anselene will provide another comprehensive update to this study within a year or so.

- [Presentation Link](#)

Staff Reports

Mr. Rivero provided the staff reports ahead of time to the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC), including an oral update on the coordination involving the joint PRC and Sports Commission meeting that is currently scheduled for Tuesday, February 20 (during the PRC's normal meeting date/time). As a reminder regarding the joint meeting, separate PRC or Sports Commission business will not be conducted, staff will not be providing the monthly staff report, nor will commission member reports be collected (all activities will resume as part of the PRC's March 2024 meeting).

Commission Member Reports

Additional items discussed during this section included:

- PRC project/committee assignments were discussed further. The following assignments were made:
 - **2023 Bill Thomas Award Co-Chairs:** Commissioners Nelson Dimpter and Alex Sanders will serve on this awards committee again this year.
 - **NSTA Site – 1840 Wilson Blvd. (site plan review):** Commissioners Sarah Baryluk (primary) and Neal Hunter (secondary) were appointed accordingly.
 - **Brookfield TSA/12th Street Landing – 601 and 701 12th Street South (site plan review):** PRC Chair, Jill Barker (primary) and Commissioner Shinners (secondary) were appointed accordingly.
 - **Barcroft Apartments Land Use Analysis Process – Property bound by Columbia Pike, South Four Mile Run Drive, and South George Mason Drive:** Commissioner Nelson Dimpter (primary) was appointed accordingly. No secondary representative was appointed (PRC Chair Barker will follow up accordingly to gauge interest from the PRC).
 - **Forestry and Natural Resources Commission PRC Representative:** Commissioner Gary Shinners will be the representative.

Other Business

- Letters to the County Board
 - 2023 Year End Report & 2024 Plan of Action
 - PRC Vice Chair Kuppa will update the report and plan of action to acknowledge distribution prior to the County Board's January 2024 meetings.
 - FY 2025 Operating Budget Letter
 - PRC Chair Barker will be drafting a letter and PRC Vice Chair Kuppa will be an editor.
- Potential Agenda Topics for the Joint PRC and Sports Commission Meetings
 - Mr. Rivero mentioned that DPR Director, Jane Rudolph will be present at the February 20 joint PRC/SC meeting. Topics of interest that are anticipated include presentations on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget and the on-going discussions associated with the FY 2025-2034 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), among others. Joint priorities between the

PRC/SC as part of the Q&A. Another item may be the Athletic Field Availability Project amongst the two groups.

MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES

No motions and actions (with documented votes) were taken on any items presented at this meeting.

Meeting adjourned at **8:44 p.m.**