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

January 21, 2025

The **Park and Recreation Commission** convened its meeting at **7:00 p.m.** on **Tuesday, January 21, 2025.**

**PRESENT (VIRTUALLY)**

PRC Vice Chair, Gary Shinnars  
Commissioner Erika Allen  
Commissioner Andrew Damitio  
Commissioner Nelson Dimpter  
Commissioner Daniel Garay  
Commissioner Neal Hunter  
Commissioner Claire Pascocello  
Commissioner Melissa Riggio  
Commissioner Alex Sanders  
Commissioner William (Will) Way  
At-large Commissioner Nia Bagley, Planning Commission  
At-large Commissioner Eric Berkey, Planning Commission  
At-large Commissioner Gerald Brandt, Arlington Public Schools  
At-large Commissioner Hamilton Humes, Sports Commission

**ABSENT**

PRC Chair, Jill Barker  
Commissioner Adam Rasmussen

**STAFF**

Marco Rivero, DPR, PRC Staff Liaison  
Bethany Heim, DPR  
Jennifer Soles, DPR  
Steven Bernheisel, Arlington Public Schools

**PUBLIC COMMENTERS**

None

**OTHER ATTENDEES**

Caroline Haynes  
Elenor Hodges

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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 10, 2024 minutes.*
  - *The December 10 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 meeting.

### *APS Presentation on Current and Future Projects and APS/DPR Invasive Removal Plan Discussions*

Gerald Brandt, APS Liaison to the PRC, Steven Bernheisel, APS, and Jennifer Soles, DPR, presented on current and future APS projects and the APS/DPR invasive removal plan efforts, respectively.

PRC discussion included but was not limited to APS procurement for current and future projects and Mr. Bernheisel provided a quick update on that process, as it relates to design and construction. Ms. Soles then provided a presentation on Arlington County's invasive management program and its work with Arlington Public Schools (APS) on joint efforts. Budget and expenditures were discussed further, including those related to contractors and staff salaries. Potential opportunities for other schools to participate in additional invasive species removal, pollinator garden development, vegetable gardens, etc. and other opportunities are also being explored. Support amongst the schools/PTA on these efforts is important and clarifying where APS and County-owned land are located and how joint projects may be formed. Mr. Bernheisel detailed he will share a detailed map of APS school site boundaries. PRC Vice Chair Shinnars discussed potential for stormwater management projects and rain gardens at APS sites. Mr. Bernheisel detailed that at new school sites this is common to implement, and other existing school sites have smaller scale projects to accommodate this (i.e., Oakridge Elementary School and Escuela Key). Maintenance was discussed further, and Mr. Bernheisel detailed that agreements are created with school groups to explain the details of the project, maintenance considerations, and other pertinent details. PRC Vice Chair Shinnars complemented the work APS and DPR have done over the years.

- [Presentation Link](#)

### *Staff Reports*

Mr. Rivero provided the staff reports ahead of time to the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC), and he detailed the approval of the Gateway Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines and next steps.

Mr. Rivero provided additional details regarding the planned, PRC and Sports Commission joint meeting for Thursday, February 27. The location will likely be at Lubber Run Community Center, but the meeting is anticipated to begin earlier than other scheduled commission meetings (6:30 p.m.).

### *Discussion by EcoAction Arlington, Executive Director, Elenor Hodges on the Arlington County Tree Canopy Fund*

EcoAction Arlington, Executive Director, Elenor Hodges provided a discussion on the Arlington County Tree Canopy Fund and resource allocation, specifically related to the proposed, Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget. 4,300 trees have been funded and planted as part of the tree canopy fund since the fund's launch in 2007.

PRC discussion included but was not limited to the tree canopy fund's current funding sources and how it has run out of funding. Ms. Hodges detailed that the fund lost its funding once before (2010), and there have not been any new site plans that have assessed fees which provide the funding necessary for this program. Another discussion point is potentially assessing a higher fee for each tree assessed for future funding (\$2,400 for each tree in 2007, but it has not been adjusted for inflation since that rate was adopted). The difference between trees planted on private land (funded through this program) and what the County does for planting on public lands (and APS properties) were discussed further.

Ms. Hodges detailed the criteria for planting species (native) chosen for planting and the timing for when they are planted (by season). Review committee details were discussed further (County forestry staff, EcoAction Arlington staff, as well as other members). Other places considered are places of worship, affordable housing communities, as well as other areas of need (underserved neighborhoods) for equity purposes and the process entailed for these sites. The written criteria for this funding source are posted online and Ms. Hodges will share this with the PRC accordingly. Furthermore, PRC Vice Chair Shinnors complimented EcoAction Arlington on the contributions it has made to the County's tree canopy.

### *Commission Member Reports*

Additional items discussed during this section included:

- PRC project/committee assignments were discussed further. The following assignments were made:
  - 2024 Bill Thomas Park Volunteer Award (William Way/Claire Pascocello)
  - 2500 Wilson Boulevard Site Plan (Daniel Garay, Primary)
  - 3130 Langston Boulevard – Walgreens Site, Site Plan (Melissa Riggio, Primary)
- PRC Vice Chair Shinnors provided an update on the River House site plan (Pentagon City) and the current design proposed/added density and its potential impacts to community resources/parks, including but not limited to Virginia Highlands Park, among others. A discussion of resident, recreational opportunities on the property was provided (opportunities for indoor, recreational opportunities on site as well). Impacts to other parks including Long Bridge Park which is nearby. Today, Virginia Highlands Park is approximately 20 acres. Additional land acquisition for existing parks may be difficult in this area, but there may be an opportunity here for the developer to provide recreational opportunities for their residents. Recreational and green space opportunities exist on the site, but additional amenities may be explored further.

### *Other Business*

- Letters to the County Board
  - No additional discussion on this item.
- PRC Recruitment
  - PRC Vice Chair Shinnors detailed that PRC Chair Barker will be interviewing a prospective applicant to the PRC and encouraged other commissioners to provide names of any interested individuals to the chairs and Mr. Rivero as they become available.
- 2024 Bill Thomas Park Volunteer Award (PRC Committee Member Nominees) & Process
  - Mr. Rivero detailed this year's timeline and process.

**MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES**

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

Meeting adjourned at **8:52 p.m.**