

**Urban Forestry Commission
October 27, 2016
Meeting Summary**

Attendance

Nora Palmatier
Steve Campbell
Dean Amel
Paul Campanella
Phil Klingelhofer
Elisha Sigmon Rubin
Mikaila Milton
Ed Hilz

Absent

Scott Brintzer
Per (David) Midboe
Alex Sanders (E2C2)
Caroline Haynes

County and State Staff

Brian Keightley, DPR
Vincent Verweij, DPR
Jim McGlone, VDOF
Benjamin Burgin – APS
Bernadette Grullon – DPR
Josh Serck - DPR

Consultants

Atara Margolies – QEA
Randy Wong – QEA
Barry Duncin – WSSI
Lauren Brandes - Oculus

Guests

Kit Norland – ACE
volunteer

Public Comment

No public comments.

Stratford School Presentation

APS consultants Atara Margolies (Quinn Evans Associates) and Lauren Brandes (Oculus) presented the following information:

- New Middleschool for 1000 students.
- 40,000 s.f. addition and renovation of existing building with additional 144 parking spaces.
- 425 trees on-site, proposing to remove 166. Of 425 trees, 209 given a higher preservation priority.
- Of 166 removals, 57 are trees given a higher ranking for preservation priority.
- Planting restrictions for historic views and fire lanes.
- Using county guidelines, 194 replacement trees are required for the 166 tree removals.
- Proposed replacement trees are species native to Arlington.
- Landscape Architect to continue working with county Urban Foresters on issues such as invasive plant species, reducing tree spacing requirements in reforestation areas, returning the hillside to a more naturalized area.
- Soil reconditioning for the landscaped areas.

The following topics were discussed:

- Will an arborist be on-site during the construction for oversight?
 - All tree removed outside the LOD will be overseen by a certified arborist.

- UFC recommended that it should be part of the big documents.
- UFC stresses that tree preservation installation, monitoring, and tree planting be overseen by a Certified Arborist
- The rating system that the consultant used to evaluate trees.
 - Based on ISA
- Project goes before County Board in January for approval.

Action Taken:

Dean Amel will draft a letter to the Board discussing the issues with the steep slope area near the proposed new entrance road and recommend reforesting the areas. Also the letter will emphasize establishing oversight responsibility of the tree preservation and planting.

Bluemont Park Field Renovations and Trail Connections

Bernadette Grullon and Josh Serck of DPR’s Park Development division presented the following information:

- Capital Maintenance Project.
- Bring field up to current design standards and regulatory requirements (i.e. ADA).
- Safe routes to school connection.
- Public feedback and interests
 - Field use and fencing are the main concerns.
 - Moving stormwater mitigation, shift strips or moving to another location.
- Community engagement process
 - Staff understands that residents may lack confidence and trust in process.
 - Lack of signage and information about public meetings and feedback.
- Existing conditions
- Approved project scope
- Revised project scope after public feedback
 - Reduce the fencing on field #3 by 20%
 - Reduce the outfield fence height by 50%
- Explained how outfield fence also doubles as required barrier for BMP credit.
- Next steps:
 - Brief PR, Sports, and Urban Forestry Commission.
 - County Manager update at Nov 9 recessed meeting.
 - same presentation
 - County manager has directed DPR and other departments to improve county engagement.

The following topics were discussed:

- Definition of a renovation; the community had a different understanding.
- Spacing of the athletic fields at Bluemont.
- What is the goal for forester at Bluemont.
- Website was poorly designed.
- Fence location not clear on schematic drawings.

- Improvement of overall dissemination of information

Action Taken:

Nora Palmatier will draft a letter of general support, with a reminder that front end communication from County staff to the advisory commissions is critical.

FY 2016 Budget Close-Out and FY 2018 Budget Guidance

The following topics were discussed:

- Letter to County Manager for better metrics on tree maintenance.
- What to do with unallocated money
 - Move from capital projects to land acquisition.
 - Maybe getting funds for tree maintenance from operating contingent.
- Spend by June 30, 2017

Action Taken:

Nora Palmatier will draft a letter to the board that funds be shifted to land acquisition and tree maintenance.

Updates on Ordinance Adjustments for Tree Preservation

- Vincent Verweij, Brian Keightley, Nora Palmatier, and Steven Campbell to meet in coming weeks to discuss the enabling legislation
- Nora Palmatier separately meeting with Jason Papacosma in the Environmental Management Bureau
- Kit Norland, present at the meeting, is working with ACE on the advocacy side.

No Action Taken

Approval of July and September Minutes

Action Taken:

- July minutes approved. Phil Klingelhofer motioned, Dean Amel seconded.
- September minutes approved. Phil Klingelhofer motioned Elisha Sigmon Rubin seconded.

Staff Reports

Vincent Verweij provided the following updates in an email prior to the meeting:

iTree:

I'm done with my collection! I'm processing data right now, preparing presentations, and reaching out to staff and commissions on presentations. I anticipate presentations to happen in early 2017.

DES:

Four Mile Run stream restoration: tree removal about to start. Will be looking bare for a bit.

Replacement trees will be compatible with overhead powerlines, all native species.

Clark St Bridge: Clark and Route 1. This bridge will be demolished, affecting about 200 trees.

They are mostly small ornamental trees, and will all be replaced with native species, appropriate for this area, with amended soil, and watering provided by DES.

Schools:

Stratford: providing comments for the use permit submission. We are exploring whether reforestation can help them with their stormwater calculations. I am coordinating with Historic preservation requirements to ensure the historic view is maintained, which may actually mean more canopy trees (as they can be limbed up for visual clearance).

Wilson: Provided comments for this use permit, as well. A very urban project, which will include some rooftop trees, and street trees with creative design. See Steve Campbell's report, too.

Site plans:

Projects of concern:

11th And Vermont: A church conversion to residential. I am very concerned about the lack of proposed open space, and consequent lack of future canopy on this project. I have provided comments to this respect.

Crystal Houses III: This was submitted preliminarily. Major tree impact on Eads park. I am exploring whether tree preservation can be prioritized. The current plan shows a very replacement-heavy proposal, and some excellent trees are on site right now.

River House: in its very preliminary stages. The plan looks ambitious. I've provided comments on areas that could be preserved, outside of the proposed buildings. There is an opportunity for more naturalistic reforestation on this project.

Century Center (Crystal city): Two designs are proposed, and one proposes a large transformer in the privately-owned right-of-way, which would affect some medium-aged willow oaks. We have recommended against this option (the other option seems more tree-friendly)

I'm also working on the Penzance building associated with the Wilson school, and several smaller site plans, but they do not seem to pose major concerns

Champion trees:

Re-measured the Hackberry, and we will submit it to stay on the Virginia state champion list as the 5th largest.

We also measured a Kousa dogwood, which would be the state champion, if I didn't feel awkward about gaming the system on the measurements. The measurement is supposed to be under where the trunk splits, and this gives it a very unrealistic size.

I attached pictures of the trees.

Other:

Stratford Park: I'm working on this, instead of Brian, because of the proximity to Stratford school. The plan is under review, and close to completion. Some tree impact, but most of it is already disturbed. There will be tree planting for this project.

Four Mile Run Valley planning: I met with the new planner on this project, and I will be attending future meetings. I showed her the champion Cottonwood, and provided some background on preservation and planting around the park.

I attend the Treematter symposium, which had great presentations by Erika Svendsen on engaging resident groups, Kim Coder on drought and ice storms, Ed Gilman on nursery practices, Jim Urban on soil volume. I had seen the latter two, but still learned a lot of new research. I hope to implement some of the finer-grain knowledge into our practices.

Brian Keightley provided the following updates in an email prior to the meeting:

- Tree crew busy with emergency pruning and removals. Tree crew working with qualified staff when removal or pruning is in question to minimize unnecessary take downs or damage to trees.
- We are working with tree planting contractor for fall planting, expect to break ground in next two weeks.
- Urban Forester Position – hoping to have it filled by end of November
- Notable Trees for FY17 – we have begun to accept applications, working with John Wingard to get measured.
- Working with ACE and Nora on revisions to the Tree Canopy Fund. This will likely be a several month process before it goes to the board for approval.
- Oak Decline – have had extensive conversations with Virginia Tech Plant Pathology lab and there are several possibilities to investigate. Including a lethal combination of late spring frost and late summer drought.
- Starting November 17th, I will be wearing two hats as both Urban Forest Manager and Acting Deputy Division Chief of Environmental Planning and Operations.

Park Projects

Woodlawn Park –

- Reforestation was not done to specification by contractor. The area has been mitigated and correctly seeded and planted.

Bluemont Field #3 Renovations and Trail Connections – tree preservation for field looks good.

Highview – underconstruction. Tree preservation looks good.

Tuckahoe Park - Finished

Oakland Park – unveiling of draft design plans - Nov. 28 at 7 p.m. at the Ballston Virginia Square Civic Association meeting- The Jefferson, 900 N. Taylor Street.

McCoy Park – Neighborhood Conservation project. Very small project, likely to take out several ornamental cherries but with replacements. Urban Forestry lobbying for native species.

Commission Member Reports

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) – Caroline Haynes’ NRJAG report is attached.

Park and Recreation Commission – Caroline Haynes’ Park and Recreation Commission report is attached.

Planning Activities – No update this month.

Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) – No update this month.

Rosslyn Highlands Park – No update this month.

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) – Alex Sanders’ report is attached.

Thomas Jefferson Working Group – No update this month.

Tree Stewards – Nora Palmatier’s Tree Steward Report is attached.

Tree Canopy Fund – No update this month.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Nora’s report attached.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – Phil Klingelhofer’s NCAC report is attached.

Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) – No update this month.

Four Mile Run Valley Working Group – No update this month.

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) – No update this month.

Arlington Public Schools (APS) – Jim Meikle’s report attached.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – No update this month.

New Business

Recognition of Jamie Bartalon's retirement.

- Brian Keightley will send out information in regards to any celebration.

Next Meeting: November 17, 2016

Attachments to October, 2016 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) – Caroline Haynes

In August, Sarah Archer, Natural Resources Specialist, reported on progress within the invasive plant control program, including the increase in the number of targeted sites and partnerships with volunteers. She also reported on progress in expanding the county's native plant nursery. She focused on the need to both remove invasive plants and also to have appropriate native plants to assist in restoration of plant communities. There was no meeting in September.

Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) – Caroline Haynes

Last night the PRC heard a presentation on the potential health implications of synthetic fields. To date, there is no conclusive evidence that synthetic fields are linked to increased incidences of cancer. The EPA announced recently that it will be putting together a report on this issue.

We also received a presentation on the Transfer of Development Rights as a tool for acquiring more open space and parks. This was billed as "TDR 101" to provide background on the origination of TDRs and how they have been used to date to support affordable housing, historic preservation and open space.

The PRC also approved two letters, one opposing the extent of a capital maintenance project on Bluemont Field #3 which will result in a large expansion of the footprint of the diamond field and fencing off of park space that is currently available and used for a wide range of activities.

The second letter relates to the temporary location of Fire Station #10 in Rosslyn. The PRC objects to using Rhodeside Green Park or the Wilson Field, and recommends the use of the Holiday Inn site.

Biophilic Cities - I realize that many on UFC attended the program on Biophilic Cities last week, sponsored by DPR, but for those who were not able to attend, I highly recommend checking out the website: <http://biophiliccities.org/> This seems like a project that UFC may want to participate in to encourage Arlington to become a Biophilic City.

Planning Activities – (vacant)

No update this month

Wilson School PFRC report – Steve Campbell

No update this month

Stratford School PFRC report – Ed Hilz

No update this month

Rosslyn Highlands Park – Steve Campbell

Steve Campbell provided 2 letters commenting on the project impact, and the siting of the fire station. The letters were discussed, and submitted with edits to Jamie Bartalon for submission to the county board. The county board expects to make a decision on this project on September 24, 2016.

E2C2 – Alex Sanders

Due to delays in the Stratford EA, E2C2 did not meet in August. We will be meeting in September on the 26th.

Thomas Jefferson Working Group – Vincent Verweij

No update this month.

Tree Stewards – Nora Palmatier

ACE has been reviewing grant applications and is setting a date for reviewing.

Tree Canopy Fund and Tree Distribution Program – Nora Palmatier

No update this month.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Nora Palmatier

December 8, Thursday at Northern Virginia Community College, topic is how to work with HOAs to improve tree canopy.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – Phil Klingelhofer

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

Presentation by Christian Dorsey, Arlington County Board Member – Regrettably, Mr. Dorsey was delayed by other matters and unable to attend.

We discussed the following issues but no action was taken:

1. Street lighting plans for county streets
2. Housing for the “missing middle”
3. Airplane noise
4. Proposed changes to NCAC Policy (see attached PowerPoint for overview, proposed changes, and rationale)

Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) – Caroline Haynes

No update this month.

Four Mile Run Valley - Nora Palmatier

No update this month.

Virginia Department of Forestry – Jim McGlone

No update this month.

Arlington Public Schools - Jim Meikle

Following his highly successful voluntary intervention at Barcroft Elementary I'm pleased to announce that Scott Brinitzer is now a formal landscaping consultant to APS and has been tasked with guiding us through getting Wakefield site back on track and sustainable going forward. Davey will be replacing all the dead trees at Wakefield starting in the next week and APEX continue to address the challenge of eradicating Japanese Knotweed from the main bio-retention basin. Scott's team will start addressing the rest of the site shortly. We would then like to do the same at Ashlawn. Not that we don't have other needs but we think these two sites have the potential to stay great in the longer term if we can 'catch' them right now.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – Kirsten Buhls

No update this month.