

**Urban Forestry Commission
December 15, 2016
Meeting Summary**

Attendance

Nora Palmatier
Ed Hilz
David Howell (PRC)
Mikaila Milton
Dean Amel
Scott Brinitzer
Alex Sanders (E2C2)
Caroline Haynes
Elisha Sigmon Rubin

Absent

Per (David) Midboe
Steve Campbell
Paul Campanella
Phil Klingelhofer

County Staff

Brian Keightley, DPR
James Meikle, APS
Jennifer Xu, APS
Jeff Chambers, APS

Guests

Jamie Bartalon, resident
Philip Scranage, Waycroft-
Woodlawn
Bill Roos
Kit Norland
Brian Cipriano, Gordon

Opening Statements

Special thanks to Jamie Bartalon, who recently retired from the County. He had served Urban Forestry Commission in several capacities on-and-off since 1997.

Special thanks to Mikaila Milton whose term is up as of December 2016. She has served on Urban Forestry Commission since 2007.

Public Comment

No public Comment

Use Permit for the Wilson School

Jeff Chambers, Director of Facilities and Operations for APS, gave an overall project overview.

- Construction start: Spring 2017
- School open: Fall 2019
- Cost \$100.8.M
- Total square footage: 176,000 GSF (not including garage)
- Capacity: 775 students
- Parking: 92 spaces in garage under field; 100 spaces in adjacent garage
- Temporary fire station on field location until 2021
- The project to be reviewed by County Board February 25

Brian Cipriano of Gordon Associates went over the landscape and exterior features design and were discussed with the group.

- 10-year event capture 90% of stormwater – unsure.
- Potential for use water for irrigation.

- Over flow to stormwater system.
- 18th street, approximately 9 trees.
- Continuous soil panels to be used for tree planting.
- The roof top terrace plantings to resemble Virginia’s physiographic provinces (Coastal Plain, Piedmont, Ridge and Valley, and Blue Ridge.), mostly smaller trees.
- There will be an urban canyon between the Wilson School and Penance Site. Discussion about survivability of trees in this area.

No Action Taken - APS has requested a recommendation letter to the Board.

Update on Ordinance Adjustments for Tree Preservation

Nora Palmatier reported on progress made on analyzing and synthesizing the ordinances of Arlington and surrounding jurisdictions and state enabling legislation.

- Arlington’s existing guidance on trees and related topics in several places in different divisions of the government (DES, Parks, CPHD)
- Is it possible to combine different guidance documents and how to implement?
- Fairfax’s guidance document (Public Facilities Manual) has 91 pages dedicated to tree preservation.
- Move Ordinance Updates to just a Commission Member report for future meetings.

No Action Taken

Approval of November Minutes

November minutes approved with minor typographical errors noted by Dean Amel. Dean Amel motioned, Elisha Sigmon Rubin seconded.

Staff Reports

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

Planning:

1. The block of the YMCA at Washington Blvd and Kirkwood Rd is under planning. This block includes some significant tree canopy, particularly along 18th St N, with old age willow oaks, post oaks, and some planted sugar maples and Southern magnolias. The soil and understory is reminiscent of Arlington Forest, and planning staff is supporting me in recommending preservation for this stand of trees for this area. More information here: <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/plans-studies/general-land-use-plan/special-study-washington-kirkwood/>
2. Central Place is finishing up construction in Rosslyn. I’m working with them on street tree and on-site tree inspections. It has less tree canopy than what was there before, but it’s somewhat compensated by expanded soil volume, and a nice grove of ginkgos in the center.

3. The Gables Transitional Living Facility is almost completed, and I have signed off on their tree planting.
4. The Latitude apartments are complete, with street trees, and onsite trees in structural cells. Looking forward to see how they do.
5. Four Mile Run Valley Planning is ongoing. Sarah Archer will lead for PNR on this. No decisions are made, but staff is making legislative restrictions to development of the floodplain clear, to pre-empt unrealistic planning.
6. Ballston Station, a site with the historic Ball cemetery, is going through planning. I'm working with the landscape architect to improve their on-site tree canopy with expanded soil volumes. You will even be able to see some of it from the street.

DES

1. We are exploring giving experimental local credit for stormwater for preserved trees on a private single-family home project with stormwater staff. More to come.
2. Met with folks from a very tree-friendly apartment complex along Columbia Pike. We may be working with them to replace trees that were removed from private property for the Columbia pike multimodal project on their property, as they seem to be very pro-tree. They have shown us that pecan trees can be great street trees.
3. Several big DES projects are coming through:
 - a. Washington Blvd Bike trail. Long-awaited, discussed for years. Finally coming through with the plan. It will be starting construction in 2017
 - b. Clark Street Bridge removal, in Crystal City. This will involve significant tree impact and replacement. Also starting next year.

Schools:

1. Wilson: Steve provided all the comments. No news from me since last time.
2. Stratford: no news
3. Abingdon: The project is finishing up the first phase, and will be looking to delay planting until the whole project is done. We support this, as construction can seriously impact tree survival, even when protected.

iTree:

1. I've met with our leadership, and our outreach team, and I'll be ready for January's UFC to present our data! I'm very excited to put this together, and am working on outreach material to reach a wider audience outside of the Usual Choir J.

Webinars:

1. Climate change and trees: Great webinar on how to prepare for climate change, and how to select for trees that may help abate the symptoms of climate change. Lots of talk about the positive resilience of native trees.
2. Urban tree canopy and forest planting for stormwater credit: This was an interesting webinar. I'm still somewhat dismayed at the lack of language for preserving tree canopy, but the conversation is improving. Smaller plantings may now qualify for credit.

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

- Tree crew experiencing season slow down with emergency pruning and removals. Preparing for snow duty.
- Fall tree planting under way with Davey, 850 trees scheduled for installation (361 reported last month was a gross underestimate)
- Urban Forester Position – realistically hoping to have it filled by end of January.
- Notable Trees for FY17 – We have received 8 nominations and moving forward with 7. John Wingard may have a few more nominations I am not aware of.
- No progress on DPR side for revisions to the Tree Canopy Fund. Hoping to make progress on this during the holiday season. This will likely be a several month process before it goes to the board for approval.
- Vincent and I are working on Arlington’s Tree City USA application for 2016.
- Vincent Verweij was selected to receive the 2016 County Manager’s Excellence Award as a recognition of his hard work on the iTree Eco Study.

Park Projects

Planning and Design Phase

- 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 – 2nd Open House for presentation of concept was held 12/14/16.
 - Outline of proposed improvements from Jeanette Ankoma-Sey:
 - Concept is to provide amenity, landscape, entrance improvements per Developer funded contribution from Site plan.
 - Upgrading of existing sidewalk impacts 3 flowering cherry trees.
 - Existing Mulberry and Pine proposed for limbing.
 - Existing Red Maple remain in place.
 - 3 existing shade trees to receive tree protection.
 - Proposed 3-4 new ornamental trees.
 - Species TBD, native or adaptive species or smaller scale to complement scale of project
 - No immediate invasive in this proximity of the park but they have a larger invasive issue throughout as a whole
- Benjamin Banneker Park – demo of the two houses on the recently acquired property to begin shortly. Working with construction management staff to avoid tree impacts.

Under Construction

- Chestnut Hills Park – adding two parcels to the existing park. Demolition of two house. Three large oak trees were adversely impacted. Working with construction manager and contractor to mitigate the situation.
- 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 – under construction. Tree preservation looks good.
- Quincy Park – Playground Renovations. Minor post construction activities such as fixing equipment and reevaluating installed landscape.

Tree Removals

- Bluemont Park tree removal and snags left has generated many comments.
- A request has been made to remove a silver maple at 1108 19th Street South Arlington, which is being forwarded to our sidewalk division due to a accessibility issue.

Commission Member Reports

Budget - Nora's Budget report attached.

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

Park and Recreation Commission – Caroline Haynes' PRC report is attached.

Planning Activities – No update from commission member this month. See Vincent Verweij's staff report relevant information.

Wilson School Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) – Steve Campbell's Wilson School report is attached.

Stafford School PFRC – Ed Hiltz will be attending the final meeting in January. No additional report this month.

Rosslyn Highlands Park – No update this month.

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) – No update this month.

Thomas Jefferson Working Group – No update this month.

Tree Stewards – No update this month.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora's Tree Canopy Fund report attached.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Nora's NVUFR report attached.

Tree Ordinance Review – Nora's report attached.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – No update this month.

Plan for Our Places and Spaces (POPS) – Caroline Haynes’ POPS report is attached.

Four Mile Run Valley Working Group – Caroline Haynes attending meeting on September 21st. Discussed location of field house, and bus parking. No additional report this month.

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

Arlington Public Schools (APS) – Jim Meikle’s report attached. Discussion was had about APS issues with design and maintenance, poor plant materials, complicated design, and tree replacement.

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

New Business

No new business was introduced.

Next Meeting: January 26, 2017

Attachments to December, 2016 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:

Budget - Nora Palmatier

Caroline and I attended the County Managers 2018 budget overview, and it will be tight since Metro and Schools are requesting more; at this time departments are not asked to submit with cuts. We'll have to monitor closely as Parks is often the first item cut.

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) – Caroline Haynes

In December we heard from Christine Sheppard, with the American Bird Conservancy, on bird strikes and how to prevent bird deaths by using bird friendly building designs, and especially bird-friendly glass. Commission members noted that relatively simple and low cost steps can be taken to prevent bird strikes. There was general agreement that additional education, both for homeowners and developers, would be useful in addressing this issue.

Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) – Caroline Haynes

PRC heard the presentation on the draft MOA with APS, focusing on community access to the exterior and interior facilities at Wilson School. PRC has raised the issue of community access throughout the process. The final agreement is still not complete, despite being slated to go before the board with the use permit in January.

We also heard a presentation from the Williamsburg Field Lighting Working Group, presenting the pro and con arguments for lighting the field. The PRC has not take a position on the issue to date. There still appears to be some confusion about how much tree loss there would be if light poles are constructed on the site.

Planning Activities – (vacant)

No update this month. See Vincent Verweij's staff report for relevant information.

Wilson School PFRC report – Steve Campbell

- The school site currently has significant tree canopy. The school and Rosslyn Highlands Park area are estimated to have slightly over 25% tree canopy cover. That said, school properties are not required to satisfy the County's tree replacement policy formulas.
- The entire site will be excavated, necessitating the removal of all existing trees.
- The concerned civic associations, North Rosslyn, Radnor/ Fort Myer Heights, and Colonial Village all strongly support maximizing tree canopy in the area.
- The Urban Forestry Master Plan generally calls for areas such as this, with its mix of commercial and residential development, to have a goal of 25% tree canopy cover.
- Due to the large footprint of the school building and large area taken by the synthetic playing field, it is a challenge to attain the desired significant tree canopy on the site.
- That said, it is my impression that APS, our Forestry Division, and DES are doing all they can to maximize tree canopy.

- Wilson School PFRC, in its letter of June, 2016, calls for improved tree canopy on the site and the planting of large tree species when possible.
- The school building design itself promises a beautiful civic building. In spite of its large footprint (in view of the number of students it will house, approx 800), there will be five large roof terraces, four of which will be planted with trees and shrubs.
- APS has developed an interesting themed concept for these terraces 1) Coastal Plain 2) Piedmont 3) Blue Ridge 4) Valley and Ridge. The fifth will have rooftop equipment and partial green roof. Plant species selection on the terraces will have to of course consider our local environment. Planter bed soils can be tailored to selected species.
- It is likely that trees planted on terraces will not be large canopy tree species, but the use of at least moderate size tree species to maximize canopy should be encouraged.
- As mentioned in a 5/2016 PFRC presentation, these native terrace plantings will also serve to "have nature be a backdrop to the learning environment".
- At grade on the site:
- It appears that the design of the two triangular plazas along the Wilson Boulevard sidewalk will maximize tree canopy.
- Vincent, with the cooperation of APS is also finding as many sites as possible behind the school building to plant trees, although most of the area will be taken up by the playing field.
- Tree species in both of the above areas should be as large as the space permits, rather than selecting species based only upon their ornamental qualities.
- Street trees along Wilson Boulevard and Quinn Street will have 6.5 ft wide planting strips in continuous soil panels with good quality soils (as called for in WRAP (Western Rosslyn Area Plan).
- Street trees along 18th Street appear to be a work in progress. Because of a tall playing field fence along the inside of the sidewalk, trees really need to be placed along the curb even though bus unloading will take place there (the entire length of their property on 18th).
- APS is considering having the buses park diagonally to the curb to lessen impacts with street tree canopy. This would be very important!
- The width of the soil panel for these trees may currently be less than even the 5 ft standard, unless further accommodation can be made to the street cross section.
- My suggestion to Transportation has been to narrow each travel lane an additional 6"-12". This could allow for a wider planting strip, and also have a calming effect on traffic on a street bordered by parks and a middle school.
- There has not been a Wilson School PFRC meeting in the last 2-3 months so something in this evening's presentation could easily contradict what I've said above.
- There is not much information currently on the County website. For some idea of the design concept for this property go to the 7/20/2016 presentation by the APS Board.
<https://www.apsva.us/design-and-construction/wilson-school-project/>

Stratford School PFRC report – Ed Hilz

No additional report this month.

Rosslyn Highlands Park – Steve Campbell

No update this month

E2C2 – Alex Sanders

No update this month.

Thomas Jefferson Working Group – Vincent Verweij

No update this month.

Tree Stewards – Nora Palmatier

Phil, Caroline, Elisha, Steve, and Scott reviewed and approved applicants with only a few rejected for wrong place/wrong species. The contractor will most likely be Davey and a meeting to discuss issues has been set.

Tree Canopy Fund and Tree Distribution Program – Nora Palmatier

Need UFC members to attend application review meeting Nov. 30, Wednesday, 6:30 PM at 2700 Taylor St. Please plan on coming. ACE still recruiting Contractor for planting.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Nora Palmatier

Topic of HOAs was held 12/8 with our own Brian Keightley sharing his experience while with a tree service. Next topic is on success stories of undergrounding wire/pipes among trees -- Vincent, Jim will present. location and date in late Feb. still being set.

Tree Ordinance Review – Nora Palmatier

I've created a 2 page document describing Arlington County and Fairfax standards if anyone wishes to see it, I'll send it out. Topic is still very much in discovery phase. Have contacted Jason Papacosma from DES stormwater who will take up my questions with urban forestry staff, spoke with Jay Fisette just to update him, and contacted Barbara Favola for her thoughts on state and local tree issues.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – Phil Klingelhofer

No update this month.

Plan for Our Places and Spaces (POPS) – Caroline Haynes

An invited charrette was held last Friday to bring together professional landscape designers, engineers, urban planners, developers, staff and working group members to think of some of the big ideas we may have missed in the process so far, and to dig down into some issues

particularly relevant to Arlington. The event was well-attended and created a robust exchange of ideas. Staff will be pulling together a summary from the event. The next working group meeting, scheduled for December 20, will focus on land acquisition policies.

Four Mile Run Valley - Nora Palmatier

No additional report this month.

Virginia Department of Forestry – Jim McGlone

No update this month.

Arlington Public Schools - Jim Meikle

- UFC PFRC/BLPC liaisons on school projects have provided those updates.
- APS D&C staff will be there tonight to provide an overview on the new Wilson School with emphasis on proposed plantings.
- The ‘Britzner’ company have mobilized at WAKEFIELD and the man himself may be there tonight to share more. Here’s an extract from our latest exchange:

“We expect to have concept drawings to share in January. The process has been slowed by our work load, which is now much reduced due to the time of year. We are working in a bit of a vacuum without a lot of public input, so our concepts will most likely provoke discussion. Revisions to our plans are expected. Our overarching goal is to recommend improvements, plantings, that will survive Wakefield’s poor soils and lack of irrigation. The benefit of our approach, working on individual areas, but with the entire site in mind, is that we can implement sections at a time, make sure that they are a success, and then move the next area.....WE will accelerate in January.”
- DISCOVERY plantings have had a very positive start with the vast majority surviving and thriving.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – Kirsten Buhls

No update this month.