

**Urban Forestry Commission**  
**March 24, 2016**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Attendance**

Nora Palmatier  
Caroline Haynes  
Phil Klingelhofer  
Karen Kumm Morris  
Paul Campanella  
Alex Sanders  
Steve Campbell  
Dean Amel  
Elisha Rubin  
Scott Brintzer

**State and County Staff**

Jamie Bartalon, DPR  
Vincent Verweij, DPR  
Brett Wallace, CPHD  
Steven Bernheisel, APS  
Jim McGlone, VDOF

**Guests**

Jay Fisette, Vice Chair, Arlington County  
Board

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Discussions with County Board Vice Chair, Jay Fisette**

Vice Chair Fisette thanked the Urban Forestry Commission for their work and invited them to share their thoughts and concerns regarding Arlington's urban forest. He noted that a healthy discussion on trees took place during the Rosslyn PDSP process, and recalled the photos presented by Nora Palmatier at the recent County Board/DPR budget work session, illustrating the size difference between trees planted side-by-side at the same time in tree pits vs. an open lawn area. He also acknowledged receipt of the UFC's budget input letter, requesting an additional \$100,000 in funding for tree maintenance. He informed the commission that the County Board is currently in the information gathering stage for budget requests, and noted that their recommendation will be discussed.

Karen Kumm Morris thanked Mr. Fisette for the attention he has given to tree related issues. She conveyed the commission's appreciation, noting that proper maintenance of trees is extremely important. Mr. Fisette noted that during difficult economic times several years ago, budgets for many County programs, including trees, needed to be reduced. However, funding has gradually been added again to support tree planting, as well as watering efforts.

Dean Amel asked Mr. Fisette for suggestions on what can be done to hold those responsible for removing the crowns from County street trees located along Washington Boulevard near Pershing Drive, given that adjacent businesses deny being responsible for damage to the trees.

Mr. Fisette recalled another location where a business owner was suspected of damaging a County tree, but noted that it is difficult to take action without having proof of responsibility. He also recalled a location where a business owner expressed concern about limbs from County trees obstructing the visibility of their sign. He suggested that coordinating the placement of signs and trees during the planning process may help to avoid future conflicts.

Nora Palmatier asked whether the UFC could ask the Police or County Attorney's Office for direction on the Washington Boulevard tree incident, or whether it would be best to write letters as residents. Mr. Fisette advised that commission members could write a letter asking that the County Attorney's Office or Police investigate the incident. He noted that it may be better if members wrote as residents. He also added that business owners respond to their customers, so approaching them directly may be helpful.

Caroline Haynes asked if Mr. Fisette would consider hosting a walk in the portion of Glencarlyn Park that has been designated as an Old Growth Forest by the Old Growth Forest Network. Mr. Fisette suggested that it would probably be better if the UFC hosted the event. County Board member attendance would need to be limited to two members at a time. He also suggested that it may be best to tie the walk to a current initiative, such as the Public Spaces Master Plan process. A past walk in Barcroft Park was tied to the Natural Resources Management Plan.

Karen Kumm Morris asked what can be done to prevent Site Plan submissions that include buildings that are cantilevered over sidewalks and street trees, such as plans that were approved for the Wendy's site in the Courthouse area and included in the Rosslyn PDSP. Mr. Fisette noted that unusual site constraints at the Wendy's location led to the inclusion of cantilevered buildings. He added that there may be additional design options that have not yet been explored, and urged the commission to continue to be vigilant in monitoring and commenting on the issue.

Steve Campbell raised concerns that the increased density permitted on some sites has resulted in plans that include planting trees on rooftops in order to meet Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance canopy coverage requirements. He questioned whether trees planted on rooftops provide the same benefits as those planted at ground level. Mr. Fisette encouraged the commission to comment whenever it appears that Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance requirements are not being met.

Mr. Fisette again thanked the commission for all that they do to support Arlington's urban forestry efforts and advise the County Board on tree-related issues. He acknowledged the strong network of volunteers that have provided assistance, including efforts to identify tree grates that have been overgrown and are causing damage to street trees.

### **Arlington County Landscape Standards Update**

Brett Wallace, CPHD, provided an update on efforts to revise Arlington County's Landscape Standards document, which includes specifications and details for tree planting and tree pits. Mr. Wallace is an ISA Certified Arborist and a Landscape Architect. He is responsible for CPHD review of Landscape Plans for Site plan projects, and works closely with DPR Urban

Foresters and developers during the plan review process. Mr. Wallace noted that competition for space among streetscape elements is often a challenge, and he constantly works to find the best fit for maximizing tree canopy and tree planting opportunities.

Mr. Wallace reviewed several details for street tree planting, tree pits, and continuous soil panels that have already been approved or are going through the final stages of the approval process. He noted that standards and guidelines are constantly evolving to reflect current best practices. Standard Site Plan Conditions are reviewed annually by staff to reconcile any discrepancies/issues that have been identified over the year, and any updates are incorporated. After interdepartmental review (including the County Manager's Office and County Attorney's Office), proposed changes are also reviewed by NAIOP before final approval by the County.

A requirement to include continuous soil panels between tree pits is being considered during the current approval process. Mr. Wallace noted that continuous soil panels have already been installed on several projects, and many developers are already including them in early plan submittals. Mr. Wallace and Vincent Verweij also discussed the engineering limitations of spanning continuous soil panels with unsupported concrete sidewalks. Current engineering details allow reinforced concrete sidewalks to span continuous soil panels up to six feet wide. Alternative designs, such as the use of structural cells beneath the sidewalk, can increase the width of continuous soil panels, but raise construction costs.

Mr. Wallace explained that the Landscape Standards update is progressing in two phases. The first phase will be a reformatted version of the document (with color photos and illustrations) that is more attractive, concise and user-friendly. It will include revisions that have already been approved. The second phase will include more comprehensive revisions, including new standards, in a user friendly web-based format with links to other relevant documents. Staff plans to include: standards for recommended soil volumes, tree spacing, bio-retention LID street tree standards, soil depth recommendations for planting on structures, and height restrictions for cantilevered buildings.

Mr. Wallace showed illustrations of continuous soil panels connecting trees spaced at 30 feet and 25 feet, and the resulting soil volume provided for each tree. When an area of shared root space is considered for adjacent trees, a 6 foot wide continuous soil panel between trees spaced 30 feet apart provides 612 cubic feet of soil per tree. If the width of the panel is increased to 10 feet, trees spaced 30 feet apart are provided with 1,020 cubic feet of soil volume per tree. Expanding the width of the soil panel beyond 6 feet requires additional engineering solutions to adequately support the sidewalk, such as the use of structural cells. Jim McGlone remarked that it is still uncertain how much access to oxygen and water is available to tree roots in uncompacted soil beneath an impervious surface as the distance from a tree pit opening increases.

Karen Kumm Morris asked whether sandy-loam soil is specified in continuous soil panel details. Vincent Verweij responded that it is not currently specified, but in most cases he has observed, soil is often replaced with a sandy-loam mix or something approaching that composition. Ms. Kumm Morris suggested that now would be a good time to incorporate such a specification into revised standards.

Ms. Kumm Morris also asked whether any developers have submitted plans for using structural cells to increase soil volume. Brett Wallace confirmed that the use of structural cells has been proposed for the Ballston Quarter project and has been approved for the Latitude project. Vincent Verweij added that structural cells were installed in the plaza area on the Tellus project. Ms. Kumm Morris remarked that it seems likely that developers would design their projects to comply with County standards if a minimum soil volume of 1,000 cubic feet per tree was adopted by the County. Nora Palmatier asked why the County can't just require developers to provide higher soil volumes. Mr. Fisette noted that Arlington's Site Plan process involves negotiations between the County and developers. He also noted that there are many competing interests for limited space in streetscapes.

As discussions of soil volume and tree spacing continued, Mr. Fisette asked whether there is a point where the tree canopy benefits provided by fewer, widely spaced trees with greater individual soil volumes may outweigh the benefits provided by a larger number of closely spaced trees with less soil volume per tree. It was noted that tree spacing and the spacing of streetlights also need to be coordinated.

Mr. Wallace acknowledged the benefits of providing increased soil volume for street trees, as well as the competing interests for limited space along streetscapes. He noted that comprehensive revisions to the County's Landscape Standards, including soil volume and tree spacing will continue to move forward through interdepartmental review, as well as review by NAIOP before final approval.

### **Arlington Home Show and Garden Expo**

Nora Palmatier reminded UFC members that the Arlington Home Show and garden Expo will be held on Saturday, April 9, at Thomas Jefferson Community Center. This event is a good opportunity to educate builders and homeowners about how to reduce tree impacts during home construction projects, and how to help care for trees after projects have been completed. Tree Stewards will be staffing a booth with brochures and a tree canopy coverage map. UFC members were also asked if they could volunteer for a shift to help staff the booth.

Both Dean Amel and Paul Campanella volunteered to take a shift at the event. Mr. Campanella also mentioned that Urban Forester Rachel Jackson was successful in getting a developer to alter plans so that impacts to the crown of a neighboring tree could be reduced.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the February 25, 2016 UFC meeting were approved.

### **Staff Reports**

Jamie Bartalon provided the following updates:

- The results of a statistically valid survey of Arlington residents conducted as part of the Needs Assessment Phase of the PSMP indicated that the top priority for outdoor improvements is to maintain and preserve trees and natural areas. The top two unmet outdoor needs are hiking trails and natural areas/habitat. Nature programs received the top importance/investment rating for programs.
- Legislation introduced by State Delegate Patrick Hope to change the definition of Noxious Weeds in State Code has passed. The change removes the requirement that plants must be “not widely disseminated” in Virginia in order to be eligible for the Virginia Noxious Weeds list. However, the new definition stipulates that the propagation or sale of plants must not be commercially viable in Virginia in order for them to be listed as Noxious Weeds.
- This year’s Notable Tree awards ceremony will be held on April 19, at the beginning of the recessed meeting of the County Board. Arlington’s 2016 Arbor Day ceremony will be held on April 26, 2:45 p.m., at Oakridge Elementary School.

Vincent Verweij provided the following updates:

- A final decision has not been reached on whether a through road/driveway will be included in final plans for the Stratford School renovation project.
- Staff is working to have street trees included along 18<sup>th</sup> Street North on the Wilson School project.
- Volunteers with a good knowledge of trees and data collection skills are being sought to assist staff with data collection for an iTree survey. So far, 22 of 201 survey plots have been completed. Caroline Haynes added that she has been discussing opportunities for environmental education programs with DPR Director Jane Rudolph, and Deputy Director Jennifer Fioretti. She noted that a program on iTree is something to consider.
- Vincent Verweij will host another Champion tree bike ride on June 5, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- DPR Forestry staff are working with DES on opportunities to reduce tree impacts associated with Segment F of the Columbia Pike undergrounding and street improvement project.
- DES and DPR have worked to reduce tree impacts associated with the Washington Boulevard trail project. Plans now call for a bike lane to be included along the shoulder of a segment of Washington Boulevard. The greatest impact to trees will occur near Towers Park. The project will also include an invasive plant control component. UFC members asked staff to include a presentation on the project on the April 28, UFC agenda.

### **Commission Member Reports**

**Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG)** – No report. NRJAG did not meet in March.

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

**Planning Activities** – Karen Kumm Morris’ Planning Activities Report is attached. The report also includes additional information provided by Steve Campbell on the Rosslyn Plaza PDSP and 2100 Clarendon Boulevard.

**Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC)** – Ed Hilz’s PFRC Report and Steve Campbell’s PFRC Report on Wilson School are attached.

**Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2)** – No report. E2C2 will meet on March 28.

**Tree Stewards** – Steve Campbell’s Tree Steward Report is attached.

**Tree Canopy Fund** – Nora Palmatier’s Tree Canopy Fund report is attached.

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

**Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC)** – Phil Klingelhofer was not able to attend the March NCAC meeting, but reported that the agenda included a presentation on sidewalks and specifications for their width. Rather than always requiring the installation of 5-foot wide sidewalks, variances to allow for the installation of 4-foot wide walks are now more likely to be considered. The potential to reduce the width of new sidewalks under some circumstances may help to preserve adjacent trees.

**Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP)** – Dean Amel’s PSMP report is attached.

**Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)** – Jim McGlone announced that Paul Revell, VDOF’s head of Urban and Community Forestry, has passed away. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 26.

Dr. McGlone also reported that he recently met with representatives of the HOA and management company for Colonial Terrace in Arlington to discuss the health of their wooded area. English ivy and winter creeper are very abundant in their woodlot. Their representatives have some interest in implementing invasive plant control efforts, but not much funding is available. Dr. McGlone provided them with a management plan and advised them, at a minimum, to cut vines that are threatening trees.

**Arlington Public Schools (APS)** – Steven Bernheisel reported that the FY 2017 proposed budget for APS includes \$100,000 in funding for landscape maintenance. A strategy on how to best utilize the additional funding is being developed.

Mr. Bernheisel thanked Tree Stewards for their work at Arlington Traditional School. Tree Stewards are also scheduled to provide assistance at Kenmore Intermediate School in April.

**Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)** – No report.

## **New Business**

Paul Campanella and Nora Palmatier will represent the UFC on the Four Mile Run/Jennie Dean Park planning process.

## **Attachments to March 24, 2016 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:**

### **Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) – Caroline Haynes**

At last night's meeting we received a presentation on the Central Place site plan amendment, scheduled to be considered by the County Board at the April meeting. PRC is planning to send a letter objecting to the encroachment of open space and encouraging an evaluation of the proposed loss of community benefits. The issue of tree pits was also raised with the applicant noting that they were conforming to the Rosslyn Sector Plan guidelines, which we have noted before, may be inadequate to support canopy trees.

We also had an update on the POPS survey data, as well as a presentation from Mike Nardolilli on the history of the C&O canal and W&OD Railroad and how both influenced the development of Arlington. Mike also provided an update on NOVA Parks. The Commission took action on the Bill Thomas Award, which will be presented at the April 19, 2016 carry over County Board meeting.

Steve, Nora and I spoke during Board consideration of the Rosslyn Plaza PDSP. There was a good deal of discussion about open space issues and a motion to increase the size of the plaza, in keeping with the Rosslyn Sector Plan, was made by John Vihstadt and supported by Jay Fisette. Libby Garvey, Katie Cristol and Christian Dorsey opposed the motion.

Nora and I also spoke at the County Board budget work sessions. My comments focused on PRC support for a robust land acquisition policy and funding.

### **Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris (with additional information from Steve Campbell)**

#### **Planning Initiatives**

- Community Facilities Study –No new info. Nora Palmatier is tracking. County staff to provide preliminary comments by Feb. 2016. Final staff recommendations and community comments expected by September 2016.
- Western Rosslyn Area Planning Study (WRAPS) - Steve Campbell's update.
- Lee Highway Corridor – Community Vision Draft Report. Window for comments close end of March, 2016. Could use more comments in support of more soil volume, and best practices in soil amendments, page. 28, and implementation steps calling for establishing standards for streetscape, page 59. <https://arlingtonva.opencomment.us/lee-highway-draft-community-vision>
- Columbia Pike and Crystal City Reassessment – County has announced a new “Premium” Bus Service for Columbia Pike.



- PSMP – Public Spaces Master Plan, see Dean Amel’s update
- Nauck Town Square – A new outdoor civic space for the Nauck community adjacent to Drew Model Elementary School. Approximately 1 ac. Walter Hood, a nationally renowned Landscape Architect and artist presented his proposal on March 22, 2016 to community. Open comment period on line. Very interesting, sophisticated plan. Significant tree canopy increase. Funded in the CIP, should be installed this fall/winter, 2016.

### **SPRC Site Plans (Approved)**

**Rosslyn Plaza, PDSP, SP#422, Rosslyn** – Approved by County Board in Feb, 2016. 1.8 million SF of office, 600- 700 residential units, and 83,500 SF of retail. Significant town square/open space along Kent Street. All trees and urban open spaces are over structured garages with soil medium to be determined with best practices at the time of site plan reviews. Steve Campbell will provide update.

**Rosslyn Plaza PDSP update from Steve Campbell** - The County Board unanimously approved the Rosslyn Plaza Phased Development Site Plan on March 12th. It is a large project comprising 7.65 acres of downtown Rosslyn. This project is for five new buildings situated north of Wilson Boulevard, between Kent Street and Arlington Ridge Road, that will be developed over the next 25 or more years. Building phases 1 and 2 may begin construction as soon as two years from now.

This PDSP also provides for 1.7 acres of public open space. This area includes the main plaza park, the adjacent 'L' shaped park, the Esplanade, and one additional open space that will be part of phase 4 and 5 building development. Rosslyn Plaza promises to contribute significantly to the transformation of Rosslyn into a dynamic urban area.

**Cantilevers-** UFC opposition to the proposed cantilevers was in the end not addressed in the PDSP. UFC will have to weigh in on this during the Final Site Plan process for each building as they are developed.

**Tree pit design-** As a result of our UFC letter, staff agreed to add some language to condition #44 re: tree pit design, which previously only specified the current minimum standard (new language: "or in accordance with County tree pit standards that apply at the time"). As you all know County staff is currently working on new, improved standards that will likely be in place by the time the first site plan is considered.

For further information:

<http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/rosslyn-plaza/>

### **SPRC Site Plans (active)**

**The Berkeley – SP #431**, located south of S. Glebe Road adjacent to Four Mile Run. Proposal for 2 5-story residential building, 287 units. Will be heard by County Board in May, 2016.

**750 N. Glebe Road, Mazda Site, SP#440, Ballston** – On going SPRC review.

A 12 story, brick residential development at the corner of Wilson and Glebe that steps down to 4/5 stories on the existing community side of the block. Currently developed with the Rosenthal Mazda Dealership and surface parking and Enterprise Rent-a-Car.

There are many issues related to building mass, street network, loss of existing service alley and open space raised by the community. Proposed tree planting plans are good, but additional canopy is possible at the corner of Vermont and Tazewell Street.

Opportunity to request increased soil volume and horticultural soils (not structural soils) for the street trees. Need to have UFC to request that all street trees be replaced and planted with a min. of 1,000 cf, of sandy loam (not structural soil). If the tree pits are to be used as SWM bioretention ponds, UFC should request that an alternative design be used to avoid restricting the species to only wet tolerant trees that can handle stormwater collection in the sunken tree pit.  
**Need to send a letter requesting increased soil volume and trees planted at sidewalk elevation.**

Staff anticipates the plan will have a County Board Hearing in June, 2016.

**2000 Clarendon Blvd. SP #441, Courthouse** – located just east of N. Courthouse Road. Proposal for 90 residential units, 13 story building with ground floor retail. Proposal includes 7 street trees along Clarendon. Graphic shows a multi stem tree, should be canopy trees. Standard request for continuous soil panel, 1,000 cf. of soil, and sandy loam soil amendments.

**Additional information on 2000 Clarendon Blvd. from Steve Campbell** - This project is completing its SPRC process. It will be a residential building that has very little open space. Vincent and Brett Wallace have been very effective in getting the developer to agree to continuous soil panels for the **five street trees** (estimated soil volume per tree approx. 600 cubic feet), rather than the required minimum 180 cubic feet. Unfortunately, the site does not have adequate planting space on their private property at grade to satisfy the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance's 20-year tree canopy requirements. Vincent is working with the developer's landscape architect to site additional plantings/trees on the building's roof to make up the difference. Bravo Vincent!

For further information:

<http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/2000-clarendon-blvd/>

### **Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) – Ed Hilz and Steve Campbell**

#### **Ed Hilz's PFRC Report:**

At the Mar 16 meeting, the PFRC continued its review of the issues regarding the renovation and expansion of the H-B Woodlawn/Stratford building which will house the new Stratford Middle School.

At the following link to the PFRC website, you can access the Agenda for the Mar 16 meeting: <http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/public-facilities-review->

[committee-pfrc/](#). In addition, at the following link on the APS website <http://www.apsva.us/Page/29586> you can access the slide presentation made at the Mar 10 Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) meeting which was the same presentation shown at the Mar 16 PFRC meeting.

The following are the urban forestry related issues discussed at the PFRC meeting:

- Staff will be recommending to the School Board an exit only driveway (the “high road”) connection from Vacation Lane to Old Dominion (see slide 22).
- If there was no driveway connection to Old Dominion, a driveway parallel to the school would still be needed for fire truck access and to turnaround
- The revised costs of the driveway connection out to Old Dominion is \$2M and the fire access driveway is \$1.7M
- Impact of proposed driveway out to Old Dominion:
  - 407 trees are in the construction impact area
  - 166 trees are to be removed
  - 241 will remain
  - APS will be required to plant 211 replacement trees
  - If only the fire access driveway is built, 30 trees would be saved.
- County Board/School Board decision on driveway connection out to Old Dominion will be made around the end of April

The "straw poll" of the PFRC was 11 to 2 against the driveway out to Old Dominion. The neighborhood representatives supported the driveway because it would reduce the traffic congestion on Vacation Lane. DES staff maintains that there would not be traffic congestion on Vacation Lane with the proposed improvements.

### **Steve Campbell's PFRC Wilson School Report:**

Wilson School PFRC met for the first time in several months. From a UFC perspective, the highlight of the meeting was new hope that street trees will be planted along over 300ft on the south side of 18th Street, between Quinn Street and Rosslyn Highlands Park. This is thanks in large part to meetings between Vincent and APS staff to find the space to make it happen. APS has not wanted street trees here because of perceived conflicts with bus loading/ unloading, and their desire to maximize the school's play field area. These trees would be planted on the inside of the sidewalk, away from the curb.

The local civic associations also spoke in support of trees along 18th. They also encourage significant planting on the rooftop terraces, which was said will benefit the students as well as the community. In fact, the school has significant tree replacement requirements- all of the existing trees on the site will be removed to make way for construction.

The evening's slide presentation is not yet posted on the APS site. For related presentations look at those of the BLPC meetings of 2/10 and 3/2. Go to: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/29273>

### **Tree Stewards – Steve Campbell**

This year's Tree Steward class is just beginning to wind down- the graduation party for the new class is April 5th, 7-9PM, at Fairlington Community Center. You are all welcome to attend and meet the members of the class. If you attend, please bring a snack or something to drink to share.

It is the beginning of a busy season of volunteer activities: Tree Stewards are holding tree planting, tree mulching, native plant sale, and tree information table events.

### **Tree Canopy Fund/Tree Distribution – Nora Palmatier**

The meeting with PDR staff to discuss the possibility for co-pays for TCF recipients and creating more publicity for both programs went really well. PDR staff is looking into holding tree distribution on a weekend and a weekday evening to increase participation.

### **Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Nora Palmatier**

May 26 Roundtable is on SITES impact on urban area, at Lee Center, Alexandria. Fall topic is forest health planning, and winter is working with HOAs. Stormwater credits will be included in a Roundtable as soon as revisions are proposed by EPA.

### **Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) – Dean Amel**

Our advisory committee met on March 15 and heard a briefing on the results of the parks and recreation needs assessment that the County's consultant conducted. The results should please UFC members. Natural areas and wildlife habitat were among the highest priorities among the 1400+ citizens surveyed. When asked what they were most willing to spend more government funds on, the purchase of new land for passive recreation topped the list. A shortened version of the presentation we received can be found on the County web site here:

<http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/01/Arlington-County-Presentation-for-County-Board-Mar-15-2016.pdf>

Results from the public meetings held in February (which many of you attended) matched, for the most part, the results of the survey.