

**Urban Forestry Commission**  
**May 26, 2016**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Attendance**

Nora Palmatier  
Caroline Haynes  
Phil Klingelhofer  
Steve Campbell  
Dean Amel  
Scott Brinitzer  
Ed Hilz  
Mikaila Milton  
Taylor Pool  
Per Midboe

**State and County Staff**

Jamie Bartalon, DPR  
Vincent Verweij, DPR  
Rachel Jackson, DPR

**Guests**

Alejandro Lara

**Public Comment**

Mr. Alejandro Lara introduced himself to commission members and expressed interest in applying for membership on the UFC. He noted that he has a special interest in Dark Star Park in Rosslyn, and wants to be certain that the park is preserved into the future. He commented that Dark Star Park seems to be appreciated only once a year (during the solar alignment with sculptures), and is concerned that development pressures may threaten the park. He expressed particular concern for trees in the park, which serve as a roosting site for a large number of birds in the evening. If development occurs adjacent to the park, Mr. Lara wants to be certain that the trees are protected.

Urban Forester Vincent Verweij assured Mr. Lara that development plans are reviewed by staff for potential impacts to nearby trees, with particular attention paid to trees on park property. Jamie Bartalon also agreed to provide Mr. Lara with contact information for the Park Manager in charge of Dark Star Park, who can provide information and answer questions on maintenance of the park.

**Representation and Communication on Behalf of the UFC – Nora Palmatier**

Nora Palmatier encouraged more UFC members to actively participate in representing the UFC and providing input on the commission's behalf during public processes. Participation may include drafting letters on behalf of the UFC, representing the commission at public meetings, and testifying at County Board meetings. She noted that, in addition to delegating work more evenly, it is also beneficial to have the UFC represented by a variety of individuals at County Board meetings and during public processes.

Ed Hilz commented that any UFC member could deliver a pre-written statement representing the commission's input on an issue, but representation by the chair may be most appropriate in settings that include questions and dialogue related to the UFC's input.

Dean Amel noted that it is helpful to have meetings with individual County Board members to establish relationships and brief them on UFC perspectives. However, meetings with other County Board members need to be set up through the UFC's County Board liaison, Jay Fiset. It was recommended that a meeting with Mr. Fiset on the SITES initiative may be a good way to strengthen communication with the County Board.

Nora Palmatier reminded commission members that, if testifying on behalf of the UFC, comments should be limited to tree-related issues and should represent the views of the commission. Dean Amel noted that commission members may always sign up to speak as individual residents at County Board meetings when they are not representing the UFC. Ed Hilz commented that conversations at working group meetings are sometimes fluid. In such cases commission representatives must use their judgement on how to best frame their comments to represent views of the commission.

Nora Palmatier again encouraged UFC members to participate on work groups where UFC representation is needed. Additional /back-up representation may be needed for the Four Mile Run Study working group, and for the TJ Elementary School process. Additional UFC member participation to provide coverage at SPRC and Planning Commission meetings for Site Plans is also needed.

Commission members and staff discussed how to best inform members when input is needed on Site Plans. Vincent Verweij agreed to provide general information to Nora Palmatier on tree preservation, removal and planting associated with Site Plan projects so that she can work with UFC members to provide meeting coverage as appropriate.

### **Input on Arlington's 2017 Legislative Priorities**

Commission members discussed topics to consider for Arlington's 2017 legislative priorities. The County Board Chair, Libby Garvey, requested that commissions provide their input no later than July 15.

Caroline Haynes suggested that the UFC's letter on recommended priorities should also acknowledge the success of last year's legislation sponsored by Delegate Patrick Hope that changed the definition of "Noxious Weeds" in state law. The change expanded the number of plants that can be potentially considered for noxious weed designation by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). A next step may be to encourage VDACS to list additional plants as noxious weeds.

Nora Palmatier reported that a group of residents from McLean (in Fairfax County) has been working with State Senator Barbara Favola on potential legislation to allow Virginia localities to

strengthen tree ordinances. Ms. Palmatier will check with Senator Favola on the details and status of any proposed legislation.

Dean Amel suggested that the commission should also check with Delegate Alfonso Lopez on the status of potential legislation discussed last year that would require VDOT to work more closely with local jurisdictions on tree replacement requirements associated with VDOT projects. Scott Brinitzer agreed that VDOT collaboration is an important topic, and that it is important to be as proactive as possible, especially with projects such as the widening of I-66 on the horizon.

Nora Palmatier asked if a commission member will reach out to Delegate Lopez to see if he is interested in pursuing legislation to increase VDOT collaboration with local jurisdictions on tree-related issues. Dean Amel agreed to follow up with Delegate Lopez's office. Caroline Haynes suggested that the UFC may also want to check with Jim McGlone to see if there are potential legislative or budget issues that may impact the Virginia Department of Forestry.

The UFC will further discuss potential legislative priorities at their June 23 meeting, and submit input before July 15.

### **Sustainable SITES Initiative as an Urban Forestry Tool in Arlington**

Nora Palmatier, Steve Campbell, Vincent Verweij and others attended the Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable on the Sustainable SITES Initiative earlier in the day. Mr. Verweij explained to commission members that the Sustainable SITES Initiative was developed and is administered by the Green Building Council, which also administers the LEEDS Certification Program for buildings.

While the LEEDS Program is geared towards energy efficiency in building design, construction and operations, the Sustainable SITES Initiative examines sustainable designs and practices associated with the outdoor components of facilities. Examples include the preservation of soils and vegetation, water conservation, the mitigation of stormwater run-off, and other sustainable landscape designs and practices. Mr. Verweij noted that, although there may be opportunities in the future for Arlington to pursue SITES certification on new development projects through the Site Plan process (as with LEEDS), there are costs associated with becoming SITES certified.

Nora Palmatier commented that, although the SITES Initiative is still relatively new, it is hoped that it will help facilitate environmentally responsible changes in the way that outdoor spaces are designed, much like LEEDS has influenced building design. She also noted that there are several local examples of SITES pilot projects, including one at American University and an Anacostia watershed project. Vincent Verweij added that the GSA is requiring all new development to be SITE certified. He also noted that parks can be SITE certified.

Steve Campbell informed commission members that SITES credits are also given for restoring soils, and may help to correct the extremely poor planting conditions often present on development sites. Scott Brinitzer reminded UFC members that there are likely to be significant costs associated with consulting services, design and planning to become SITE certified. Nora

Palmatier commented that, ideally, there will also be benefits to being SITE certified. Ed Hilz asked whether the SITES program should be discussed with the SPRC. Commission members generally agreed that it is a bit early for that discussion, since the program is still in its pilot phase.

Nora Palmatier will send UFC members a link to the Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable website after information on the SITES program has been posted.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the April 28, 2016 UFC meeting were approved.

### **Staff Reports**

Jamie Bartalon provided the following updates:

- Brian Keightley will begin work as DPR's new Urban Forest Manager on May 31. The Urban Forest Manager position was recently created during the Parks and Natural Resources Division's reorganization. Brian will attend the June 23, UFC meeting.
- UFC members are invited to attend a reception organized by DPR to welcome members of the Committee for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), to be held on June 1, 5:30 pm, in suite 905 of Courthouse Plaza. DPR is striving for its 10-year reaccreditation by the National Recreation and Park Association.
- The County Board is seeking further feedback on the proposed Blue Ribbon Panel initiative. A forum for feedback is posted on the County website. The UFC submitted a letter to the County Board on May 10, commenting on the initial proposed charge and process.
- DPR's Natural Resource Manager, Alonso Abugattas, led a tour of the Barcroft Park magnolia bog and surrounding area for DPR Leadership on May 16. DPR Director, Jane Rudolph, and Deputy Director, Jennifer Fioretti participated. Another tour is being scheduled for the County Manager and his leadership team in June.

Vincent Verweij provided the following updates:

- Vincent Verweij announced that Arlington's Standard Site plan Conditions have been updated. The conditions are updated periodically to reduce redundancies, streamline the format, and make any adjustments to standard requirements. There are no significant changes to tree-related conditions. An earlier proposal to reduce redundancy by eliminating some tree inventory conditions that are already required by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance was not accepted.

Caroline Haynes commented that ensuring continued compliance with Site Plan conditions by developers is an issue, since it seems to be difficult for staff to track and

confirm that ongoing requirements continue to be met after projects are built. Ed Hilz added that Zoning may be understaffed and can't regularly perform follow-up inspections to ensure ongoing compliance after Certificates of Occupancy have been issued. He asked whether Standard Site Plan Conditions require developers to maintain and replace trees and landscaping into perpetuity. Vincent Verweij confirmed that it has been a standard requirement for the past 10 to 12 years.

- The County Board has indicated support for including a driveway connecting to Old Dominion Drive through the Stratford School site. Several commissions, including the UFC, submitted comments that did not support the driveway option. APS will next submit a Use Permit for the project to the County Board.
- DES is now required to apply for Land Disturbance permits for street renovation projects. Urban Forestry staff will review the permits for any tree impacts.

Rachel Jackson provided the following updates:

- Required tree preservation measures have been installed/implemented at the Tuckahoe Park and Quincy Park renovation projects.
- Plans are being developed for park improvement projects at Tyrol Hills Park, McCoy Park, and Dawson Terrace Park.
- The County Board will act on nominations to designate 5 trees for preservation as Specimen Trees through Arlington's Tree Preservation Ordinance in June. Staff has also received nominations to designate two additional trees for preservation through the ordinance, including a tree at Fire Station #4 in the Clarendon area. The tree at Fire Station #4 recently received a Notable Tree award. It was planted in 1964 to honor an Arlington firefighter who lost his life in the line of duty.

### **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 report.

**Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC)** – Steve Campbell's PFRC Report on Wilson School is attached. Ed Hilz reported that the PFRC did not meet on Stratford School since the April 28, UFC meeting.

**Rosslyn Highlands Park+** - No report.

**Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2)** – No report.

**Thomas Jefferson Working Group** – No report.

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

**Tree Canopy Fund** – No report.

**Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable** – The Sustainable SITES Initiative program was the topic of the May 26, Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable, and was discussed earlier as a main agenda item.

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

Mr. Klingelhofer also reported that, although NCAC program bond funding has not increased, construction costs continue to rise. As County contractors have changed, construction costs have increased by approximately 30% during each of the past two years. Previously, the most expensive NCAC project was approximately \$900,000. A cost estimate for a new project was recently submitted for \$1.9 million.

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

**Four Mile Run Valley Working Group** -Caroline Haynes’ Four Mile Run Valley Working Group report is attached.

**Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)** – Jim McGlone was not in attendance, but Vincent Verweij reported that VDOD is hiring a new Regional Forester.

**Arlington Public Schools (APS)** – No report.

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

### **New Business**

- Caroline Haynes noted that the HALRB did not mention the historical significance of trees located on the Stratford School site during their comments to the County Board. UFC members discussed how trees also contribute to the historic significance of properties, and questioned how the contribution of trees is considered by the HALRB when determining historical significance. Forestry staff will invite Historic Preservation staff to the June 23, UFC meeting to discuss the topic.



## **Attachments to May 26, 2016 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:**

### **Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) – Caroline Haynes**

Charles Smith, Fairfax County Dept. of Public Works, Watershed Projects Implementation Branch Chief and former Natural Resource Manager and key author of the Fairfax County deer management plan presented at the May NRJAG meeting on deer management strategies in other jurisdictions. He is also advising the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists on protocols to measure deer populations in Arlington.

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

Gulf Branch Nature Center 50th Anniversary: Duke Banks highlighted events scheduled on June 2 and June 12 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of GBNC.

Open space/park design for Met Park 6: The proposed design of the linear park associated with phase 6 of the Met Park PDSP includes a small play area, a small dog run and a passive area with shade structure and seating. Vornado stated that they are willing to enter into a public access easement for some of the area adjacent to their building (in previous plans was ringed by a driveway and was more of a median). The tree species have not yet been determined, but it has been noted that some of the existing trees (Chinese elms?) on the Kettler property do not appear to be healthy. (They looked dead when we visited earlier this spring, but they may have leafed out by now.)

Long Bridge Park: Carrie Johnson, Long Bridge Park Advisory Committee co-chair and Erik Beach, DPR, provided an update on the County Board and County Manager guidance, based on the recommendations of the advisory group, to move forward on design of a scaled down aquatic center to fit within the remaining budget for the entire project, including the remaining open space sections.

Budget/CIP tutorial: Michael Peter, DPR, provided an overview of the budget process, including the development of the CIP. He also provided an update of the DPR projects included in the FY17-26 CIP.

Rosslyn Highlands Park: Concerns were raised that the understandings in the WRAPS process about public access to indoor amenities at the new Wilson School have not been discussed during the PFRC process, despite multiple requests on the part of the PRC representative Katie Elmore to do so. The PRC will be sending a letter to the Board to urge that public access to the building needs to be clarified prior to this going to the board for consideration.



## **Wilson School Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) – Steve Campbell**

Wilson School PFRC met for the first time in several months. From a UFC perspective, the highlight of the meeting was 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 had not wanted street trees here because of perceived conflicts with bus loading/ unloading, and their desire to maximize the school's playing field area. These trees will 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 presentations can be viewed by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.apsva.us/Page/29273>

The next and perhaps final meeting is scheduled for June 7th.

## **Tree Stewards – Steve Campbell**

Members have been busy: planting and pruning trees, and removing stakes and wires as needed. There are several events organized to remove invasive plants and staff farmers' market tree tables. If any of you would like to brush up on **your tree ID skills**, Tree Stewards have scheduled a program to do just that on Saturday, June 4th, 2-4PM in Lacey Woods Park. **Tea and biscuits in Nora's backyard afterward.**

## **Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – Phil Klingelhofer**

On May 12, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) held its monthly meeting, with the action items listed below.

### **Discussion / Action Items**

- Review of status of active projects at: <http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/neighborhood-conservation-advisory-committee/>
- Presentation of Long Branch Creek NC Plan
- Presentation by Larry Marcus, [Transportation, Engineering and Operations](#) (TE&O) Bureau Chief: he provided a briefing on what his team does and how it relates to NC. He also gave the membership an update on the Streetlight Master Plan.
- NCAC Policy Change Overview – Paul Bolejack, Waverly Hills NC Representative: Overview presentation is attached.

I have also included the minutes of the April NCAC meeting for your information. Please let me know if you have any questions.

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

The POPS group meeting to update the Public Spaces Master Plan met on May 11 to discuss:

- Classification systems for open space
- How to measure access to open space
- How to measure service levels provided by open space
- The importance of the context in which open space is used
- The importance of the quality of open space
- Trail classification systems

Our May 25 meeting was postponed until May 31.

### **Four Mile Run Valley Working Group – Caroline Haynes**

The County Board appointed the working group on May 17; Charles Monfort was appointed Chair and I was appointed co-vice chair along with Robin Stompler. The kick off meeting is scheduled for June 1, followed by a walking tour on Saturday, June 4. The planning process is expected to last 18 months. [Four Mile Run Valley Working Group Charge](#)