
**MEETING MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL
ARLINGTON COUNTY FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

June 23, 2022

The **FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION** convened its meeting at **7:00 PM on June 23, 2022**

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY)

Acting Chair Kate Donohue

Commissioners Melody Mobley, John Carey, Kit Norland, Noreen Hannigan, Colt Gregory, Josh handler, David Howell, Steve Sockwell, Bill Browning, and Caroline Haynes

Guests Mary Glass, Bernard Berne, Kenyeta Clements, and Jesse Casey

ABSENT

Chair Phil Klingelhofer, commissioners Nat Ames and Liliana Duica

STAFF

Vincent Verweij, Ryan Delaney, John Marlin

MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES

Missing Middle Housing Study Letter:

The commission discussed spelling issues, wording of title, broadening to full ecosystem impacts, tree canopy reductions. Edits were made to the letter and approved unanimously.

Capital Improvement Plan Letter:

The commission discussed pollinator plants. The letter was approved unanimously.

Other items during the meeting without votes were the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan update, an introduction of the new deputy division chief John Marlin, deer study update, and a presentation on tree watering.

The following are staff reports:

Maintenance:

- Staff is getting ready for Fiscal year 23, starting in July, to continue to address the high volume of tree requests.
- In Fairlington, the final batch of preventive maintenance for Fiscal Year 22 is completed. An average of 88 trees were pruned and 7 removed with the Fairlington batch.
- In Ballston Park, all of the right-of way trees will have been pruned for structure or removed due to risk by June 24.
- Staff is setting out new preventive pruning program batches for the next fiscal year 2023, covering most of the rest of the untreated areas of Fairlington's trees.

- Along Quaker Lane, staff met with local residents to discuss the replacement of the hedge of Photinia shrubs, which is starting to show disease and age limitations. This will be performed in blocks, going South from 33rd St S, over the next several years.

Planning:

(Projects with high impact or high opportunity highlighted in **bold**)

Long-term planning

- S George Mason Dr's multimodal study: A study will be coming out showing potential changes to the arrangement of all of South George Mason Drive. The median of this road has large mature trees, and staff is working to identify potential impacts of different alternatives, and where new planting space may be generated. See more here: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/S.-George-Mason-Drive-Multimodal-Transportation-Study>
- Route 1 Multimodal study with VDOT. VDOT is proposing to realign Route 1 (Richmond Hwy). Opportunities exist to expand planting space and planting potential along this highway. Potential for negative impact is relatively low. See more here: https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/route_1_multimodal_improvements_study.asp

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

- In Review
 - Forestry joined CPHD to discuss the agency's comments on Crystal Tower 3 (1600 South Eads). The major comments for this project included the requirement for more extensive tree protection for onsite trees. Jose requested the developer to reduce the impervious surfaces and allow for more trees to be placed onsite to meet their canopy cover of 17.6%.
 - Internal discussion about The Elliott project and how the Columbia Pike Street improvement DES project can work together to maximize tree canopy cover and soil volume. Most of the street trees will be placed by the Elliot project.
 - Forestry inspected and reviewed project at 3401 Columbia Pike. During the review process, it was determined that trees within the lot, will be replaced with new plantings due to the construction scope. The applicant needs to submit soil volumes, and accurate calculations for the street tree should be planted on every 25-30 feet of linear frontage.
 - YMCA: this project has serious design issues, not meeting the associated planning document guidance for tree conservation, historic preservation, and site circulation, and staff is working with the applicant to revise plans.
 - Pen Place: Staff is reviewing civil engineering plans for demolition and streetscape. The landscape plan is still pending.

DES

- Two sections of Columbia Pike's multimodal project are under review: Forestry staff is working with DES to maximize soil volumes and minimize tree impact. These projects have been underway for several years, and are coming to final designs. Find out more here: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/Columbia-Pike-Multimodal-Street-Improvements>

- Staff reviewed the Headwaters of Donaldson Run project, a project to repair a stretch of Donaldson run, to minimize impact to existing trees.
- ART Bus facility: The demolition permit is under review and the Civil Engineering plan is coming up for a second review. This is an opportunity to improve a neglected site.
- Clark Bell Extension is a complete reworking of streets in Crystal City and will impact existing trees. Staff is working to get replacement trees and adequate soil volume for trees.
- Gulf Branch Green streets is a project near Donaldson Run to install four stormwater facilities. Design staff for DES are currently exploring a revision to save a large red oak at the edge of the park.
- The complete street project along 18th St S in Crystal City had a last minute revision which threatened a large private tree. Staff is working with DES and the property owner to retain this tree.

Parks

- Forestry Joined Parks planning staff at Tuckahoe Park. During the site inspection tree locations were marked and 72 trees will be planted throughout the scope of the Playground Resurfacing area: data was entered into the CarteGraph including a tree inventory and the guarantee period date.
- Forestry inspected the 15 trees that were planted at Thomas Jefferson Park as part of the Upper Field Conversion project. The trees were in good condition and accepted by the Urban Forester.
- Discussion with Parks Planning staff on the Bell Street Interim Tree Coordination. During this meeting, they discussed the impact of the new seating area and dog park on the existing canopy. This area will eventually be torn down to make room for route 1. Forestry will conduct a site inventory on what trees should be conserved vs removed.
- Meeting with Parks planning staff to discuss the Marcey Road Park project. During the meeting, it was discussed that the reforestation part of the project would occur within the next two weeks. This area is more natural and is shaded, so we are ok to proceed with planting this late in the season.

By-right projects

- Forestry joined DES staff at 844 N Madison Street for a preconstruction with the developer. The site will include nine single-family homes with no onsite trees being conserved due to grading and placement of the property and garage. Two offsite trees will be conserved, and tree protection will be included as a control to minimize impacts on offsite trees.
- Two prior violations are being resolved, at 313 N Fillmore St and 1821 N Jackson St.

Schools

- The Heights: Staff reviewed the application for a modified 18th St N streetscape. Due to advanced ADA requirements, tree pits had to be modified, and will now be installed at the back of the sidewalk.
- The Arlington Career Center started sharing conceptual designs for the project. Staff is working with APS staff to ensure tree conservation and planting are part of the process.

Federal

- Boundary Channel interchange: This project will impact trees on VDOT and Federal Highway land. Staff is trying to find out what options exist for replacement and soil remediation. Learn more here: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/Boundary-Channel-Drive-Interchange>

Tree Planting:

- Submitted invoice for spring tree planting on 22 June. The planting season ended 18 June.
- We started with 414 trees on the list but due to various circumstances and/or oversights only 398 trees were planted. A 96% success rate. The target number for the fall planting is 450 trees.

Outreach/Volunteer:

- Forestry staff assisted with the ART truck, to answer questions about trees and native plants, and present to APS students on the field of forestry. Staff was present at Kenmore school and the Columbia Pike Blues Festival.
- Forestry worked with Tree Stewards to kick off the new structural pruning training, with 11 Tree Stewards participating in the inaugural program.
- Forestry worked with Tree Stewards to train and perform a volunteer-led i-Tree Canopy analysis

The following are commission member reports:

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes):

Ryan Delaney, Principal Planner, DPR, provided an update on next steps on the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan, which is also on the agenda for Thursday's FNRC meeting.

We also discussed the papers that David Howell had circulated to County Board members and senior staff on a range of topics, including:

Natural Capital and the CIP
Missing Middle Housing and Sustainability
De-conflicting Bird Friendly Glass and Arlington's Retail Policy
Storm Water Management

We had a productive exchange on how the three commissions might coordinate efforts in addressing these issues.

Parks and Recreation Commission (Colt Gregory):

There has been no PRC meeting since my previous report. The recent update is the PRC submission of its CIP letter to the County Board. The PRC letter followed similar themes to the FNRC letter voicing support/concern for land acquisition, stormwater funding, sports field replacement, natural capital and park equity. https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/content/public/government/commissions-and-advisory-groups/parks-recreation-commission/prc-fy2023-32-cip-letter_final_061422.pdf

Public Spaces Master plan Implementation Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

No updates

Planning Activities/SPRC (Steve Sockwell and Caroline Haynes)

No activities on my part to report. However, we have several active site plans pending SPRC dates: the Xerox Building, Joyce Motors (the first under the new Clarendon Sector Plan), the Ballston Holiday

Inn. There are also 5 or 6 preliminary site plans with the YMCA project on Kirkwood Dr. presenting major issues currently.

Public Facilities Review Commission (Kate Donohue)

I attended my first PFRC meeting; multiple break-out groups discussed the schematic design of the new Career Center Project, on Walter Reed Drive. There were many excellent comments--we will be getting into more detail on the landscaping during the following two meetings, scheduled for July and August.

For more information, see <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Planning-Commission/Public-Facilities-Review-Committee/Projects/Career-Center>

Langston Highway (Caroline Haynes)

No update

Tree Stewards (Noreen Hannigan)

The Tree Stewards have participated in several activities in Arlington this month. There was a Green Community Celebration at the Shirlington Library on June 5 (hosted by Arlington DES, Master Gardeners, and EcoAction) to encourage folks to green their homes and employ sustainable landscaping practices. Tree Stewards helped staff an exhibitor table at the Celebration. And, continuing with library events, the Arlington Central Library co-sponsored a guided tree walk with Plant NOVA Trees on June 18, and Tree Stewards helped publicize the event. Tree Stewards are also serving on EcoAction's Tree Canopy Equity Advisory Committee, which met in June. ArlNow ran an article about the project:

https://www.arlnow.com/2022/05/23/new-equity-program-taking-root-to-plant-trees-in-ten-arlington-neighborhoods/?mc_cid=9ed738f72b&mc_eid=7227128d7e .

Lastly, Rod Simmons announced that the Old-Growth Forest Network (a 501(c)3 organization) is adding Monticello Park in Alexandria (a very small neighborhood stream park in DelRay that is a birding hot spot during spring/fall migrations) to its list of old-growth/mature forests. (Note: Glencarlyn Park in Arlington is already on the list.)

<https://www.oldgrowthforest.net/>

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

The deadline for submitting applications for trees to be planted this fall is midnight, Friday June 24. For the online application, species list, and related information, see

<https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/trees/tree-canopy-fund-application-fall-2022/>

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

Note-- Read to the end about a future project impacting parks (Long Bridge) and a public meeting to be held tomorrow (Wed) evening.

The Bicycle Advisory Committee met jointly with the Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) on Wednesday, June 8, 2022. (The normal Monday meeting night was changed to Wednesday because of the joint meeting.)

Daniel Reinhard, the VDOT Project Manager for the Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Study, gave a presentation on Phase 2 and the then-upcoming June 21 Public Information Meeting. In addition to

concepts for handling automobile and bus traffic, Mr. Reinhard discussed concepts for "pedestrian and bicycle refuges" in between traffic lanes, crosswalks, sidewalk lighting, and a bike and pedestrian crossing over South 18th St. that could take the form of an overpass or a tunnel.

Mary Dallo, WalkArlington Program Manager, and David Balick, BikeArlington Program Manager, updated the committee on their activities. Most notably was the annual Bike To Work Day in May. Mr. Balick said participation was up 60% from last year. There were 10 pit stops set up throughout Arlington, which were visited by approximately 2,000 riders on the morning of the ride.

David Patton, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner for Arlington DES/DOT, updated the Committee on Dominion Energy's South Glebe Substation project. This is the project that will redirect the overhead powerline poles from concrete piers in the middle of Lower Four Mile Run to under-water lines between the S. Glebe Road sub-station to a new "transition station" in Potomac Yards. Dominion had received approval for the project from state regulators/entities before approaching Arlington County about their plans, according to Mr. Patton. He then recounted meetings between Dominion and his office regarding a necessary bike/pedestrian trail detour, since the Four Mile Run Trail along that stretch will have to be closed for over 2 years. Dominion's original intention was to detour bikers and pedestrians around the substation on local streets, but Mr. Patton and his colleagues told Dominion that such a long detour for such a long period of time would be unacceptable. Dominion came back with another plan -- to build a boardwalk on the banks of Four Mile Run on the Arlington side, and therefore only close the trail for a few months while the boardwalk is being constructed/removed. DES felt this would be a much better option, so the plans for a boardwalk were approved. Construction will begin soon (any day now). The route of the bike/pedestrian detour (which now will only be used during construction/tear down of the boardwalk) can be seen in pink and blue arrows on this map, and the boardwalk inserted along the stream's edge.

<https://cdn-dominionenergy-prd-001.azureedge.net/-/media/pdfs/global/projects-and-facilities/electric-projects/power-line-projects/glebe-rebuild/approved-glebe-substation.pdf>

(Personal note: I rode my bike down there this morning. There is digging starting next to the sub-station itself, but not yet impacting FMR Trail yet. This stretch of of the stream was naturalized a few years ago with native-plants, etc., to improve the floodplain situation on Lower FMR. The banks are quite lush now with riparian vegetation and (I believe) improved bird life.)

Leah Gerber, Arlington Transportation Coordinator and BAC liaison/facilitator, gave the committees a heads-up on a state-planned project to connect Arlington with DC with a proposed Long Bridge bike/pedestrian bridge near Boundary Channel. She said this will be a major project with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) in cooperation with DC officials, and will involve parks. There will be a virtual public meeting tomorrow night, Wednesday, June 22.

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Engage/Long-Bridge-Project-Virtual-Public-Meeting>

(Note: Cynthia Palmer, chair of the BAC, announced that BAC member Dwight Hlustick passed away recently.)

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Vacant)

No report

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (Phil Klingelhofer)

No report

Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission (Liliana Duica)

No report

Virginia Department of Forestry (Jim McGlone)

No report

Arlington Public Schools (Jim Meikle)

No report

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Kirsten Ann Conrad)

No report

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.