



**ARLINGTON COUNTY  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414  
Arlington, Virginia 22201**



January 20, 2020

Matt de Ferranti, Chair, Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: County Naming Policy Revisions

Dear Chair de Ferranti,

In December 2020 the County Manager released a one-page proposal to change current practices for naming or renaming public features, such as parks, streets and schools, and installing a single mechanism for all such decisions. We would like to offer our initial concerns about this proposal.

The proposal states that the County requires a new naming policy, yet it proposes no policy statement per se. It does provide a list of proposed criteria for selecting names, which is an assortment of relevant provisions that would guide, but not guarantee, that all proposed names would have local reference. The remainder of the proposal describes a plan for a completely new committee and a new, regimented process for bringing naming proposals to the Board.

There may be good reasons for the County to develop a clear and comprehensive policy about how names for public features are selected. The Park and Recreation Commission is currently chartered with the authority to help oversee that function for public parks. This policy and process operates under official County guidelines, and, in fact, works very well. Under the current process, just in 2020, PRC forwarded, and the Board approved, three naming or renaming proposals that met current (and proposed) criteria: Selina Gray Park, John Robinson, Jr Town Square, and Zitkala-Sa Park. All of these proposals were supported by two other advisory groups—the Historic Affairs and Landmarks Review Board and the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Commission—that are part of that official process. All three proposals received praise from Board members, interested engaged civic associations, and PRC members. All three also promoted diversity and equity values into the realm of Arlington place-naming.

The Park and Recreation Commission recognizes that not all naming proposal types may have similar guidance and process mechanisms and results. In particular, some standardization and clarity may be useful if expressed in a county-wide policy that would be the foundation for all such recommendations. However, PRC also is concerned that wholesale changes would destroy a perfectly functional and successful naming process for parks, while subjecting all county naming proposals to an untested new process.

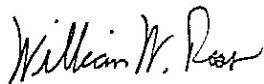
We question whether packaging naming proposals is a necessary step, rather than letting them come to the Board as they are ready and as Board priorities permit. We are not opposed to such process orchestration if it is beneficial. Doing so would not, however, require any of the other process changes that have been proposed.

The Park and Recreation Commission usually has a full agenda and shifting the park naming function to a new advisory group would remove the occasional item from that busy agenda. Nonetheless, PRC takes this responsibility seriously, and prioritizes naming proposals as they arise. It is puzzling, that in this proposal PRC's guidelines and experience would not have a primary role in park naming and renaming. The County uses numerous commissions, based on their focus and expertise, to manage or support specific decisions that concern county resources and facilities. These include, for example:

- Commission on the Arts (Grant allocations and public art selections),
- CDCAC (Numerous grant allocations),
- Forestry and Natural Resources (champion trees),
- HALRB (Renovation approvals),
- Tenant Landlord (Relocation Plans),
- Housing (Affordable Housing proposals)
- Planning and Transportation Commissions, with their crucial advisory responsibilities.

Our view of the policy/process proposal is that it may signal a desire for some clarification or codification of some naming functions, notably for streets, but that as a universal change it is misguided and unnecessary. We are supportive of a single county naming policy, and recommend that the park naming policy and process be a model for all naming functions. We do not agree that major changes to the park naming guidelines are broken, although we are open to refinements. We do not believe that the creation of yet another committee is helpful, and in fact are concerned that it would create both process and political dysfunction if authorized as proposed. We do not believe that there is a reasonable basis for building a new process from scratch.

Sincerely,



William Ross  
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation





**ARLINGTON COUNTY  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414  
Arlington, Virginia 22201



January \_\_, 2021

Matt de Ferranti Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Park and Recreation Commission Work Plan for 2021

Dear Chair Garvey:

The Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) appreciates the opportunity to update members of the County Board on the commission's work plan for 2021, including priority areas and ongoing objectives:

**Implementation of PSMP Directives:** PRC members will participate in Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) implementation processes, serving as members of the PSMP Implementation Advisory Committee and deliberating, as necessary as a commission in discussions of directives or in public engagement processes.

**Updates of the Integrated Forestry Natural Resource Master Plan:** The PRC will provide dedicated participation, through its representation on the Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group during the update of this plan.

**DPR Planning, Resources, Budget, and CIP:** The commission notes that an important responsibility is to offer the board advice on planning and budgeting of DPR programs. We will continue to review and provide suggestions on the department's proposed budget for FY 2022. Understanding the challenges faced by the COVID-19 crisis and the heightened requirements for other county priorities, we advocate that any DPR limitations or cuts take into account the need for protection and maintenance of the county's public natural resources and park facilities. Also, we support allocations that balance support of natural resources and casual uses with sports/recreation and programmed uses. We will continue an area of recent focus involving DPR fee structures and implementation of programs in a manner that respects the County Board's recent declaration of commitment to equitable treatment of all Arlington county residents. Finally, we will review the PSMP to offer advice

on coordinating its directives with CIP priorities, with an emphasis on the need for additional land acquisition, coordinated storm water/open space planning, and the fulfillment of longstanding master park plan goals.

**Apply Design Guidelines, Needs Assessment and Biophilic Principles to County and Private Open Space Projects:** The commission's ongoing participation in the Site Plan Review, Public Facility Review and other county planning processes convinces us that it is important for the county to apply design guidelines and objective standards for determining public space needs. The objective is to ensure that each new development is part of a collective whole to address area parks, public space and recreation needs. The urban design guidelines included in the PSMP should assist in short term development and long term planning as we consider anticipated population increases and demographic changes in our community.

We will continue to work with county and APS staff, developers, and other commissions to apply biophilic principles, as represented by the county's April 2020 joining of the Biophilic Cities Network, in public and private planning and design processes.

**Land Acquisition:** The commission will pursue its ongoing interest in promoting additional land acquisition for parks, recreation and open, public space. We look forward to the county's application of the specific land acquisition guidelines, ideas and strategies that are incorporated in the PSMP. The commission recognizes that adequate funding in this year's CIP round will be required to support these strategies.

Additional ongoing objectives include:

**The Bill Thomas Award:** We continue to look seek out and honor citizen volunteers who meaningfully contribute to our parks and public spaces. In 2021, we will join the County Board in honoring the 2019 winner—Elaine Mills and the 2020, to be selected in early 2021.

**Community Involvement and Engagement:** The commission will continue to take an active role in responding to community concerns involving park and recreation center planning, usage, maintenance, and recreation opportunities. We will assist residents in conferring with DPR staff to get issues resolved. We also look forward to enhanced discussions with civic groups, sports organizations and other community groups on issues of mutual interest.

**Participate in park, public space and recreation facilities planning processes:** PRC members will continue to participate in design, park renovation, and park restoration processes such as for the new South Eads/Army Navy Drive park and Clarendon Common renovations. There are also planned postponed or future park processes, such as at Bluemont and Marcey Road Parks, Gulf Branch Park, Sparrow Pond, and 12<sup>th</sup> St. South that we will be monitoring. We will entertain and discuss proposals for park name changes and memorial benches and plaques, as necessary, while participating in ongoing discussions and provide advice concerning revisions to the county facility naming policies.

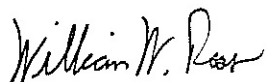
**Actively engage in planning processes with the county and with Arlington Public Schools (APS):** PRC members will continue active representation on the Public Facilities Review (Career Center) and Site Plan Review Committees. For the latter, we acknowledge the continued high level of activity during 2021, particularly for sites that have important open space considerations. Major PRC themes will involve the attainment of suitable community benefits in the form of cash contributions, land donations, or development of publically-accessible private parks and plazas. Understanding the pressures and planning that APS faces for producing more educational space, we look forward to reviewing any APS expansion plans that could have impacts on indoor recreational facilities, outdoor fields and natural spaces.

**Participate in area and sector planning processes:** PRC members will continue participation in area and sector plan groups such as Plan Lee Highway, the Clarendon Sector Plan review, the Pershing Drive Special GLUP study, the Pentagon City PDSP review, the Crystal City Heights Study, and the Crystal City Citizen Review Council.

**Enhance coordination with other commissions and committees on areas of overlapping interest:** PRC will continue to seek opportunities to work on issues of mutual interest with other commissions such as Sports, Forestry and Natural Resources, Planning, Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group, Climate Change, Energy and Environment, Arts, Joint Facilities, the Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee. We will be planning our annual joint meeting with the Sports Commission, plus possible meetings with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committees.

We appreciate having this opportunity to share our 2021 work plan with you.

Sincerely,



William Ross, Chair  
Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board  
Members, Planning Commission  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Claude Williamson, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development



**ARLINGTON COUNTY  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414  
Arlington, Virginia 22201



January \_\_, 2021

Matt de Ferranti, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Park and Recreation Commission Annual Report for CY 2020

Dear Chair Garvey,

The Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) is pleased to submit this calendar year 2020 annual report to the County Board. In our letter of January 2020, we outlined several priority areas and ongoing objectives and report the following progress on each of these:

**Implementation of Public Spaces Master Plan Priorities:** PRC members co-chaired and served on the PSMP Implementation Committee working group meetings, assisting in analysis and discussions on evaluation of Casual Use spaces, Field Utilization, and updates of the Integrated Forestry and Natural Resources Master Plan,

**Integrated Forestry and Natural Resource Management Plan:** PRC members participated in discussions of preliminary planning for the plan updates and provided input on the plan through the county's public engagement vehicle.

**DPR Planning, Resources, and Budget:** In 2020 the commission provided input and advice on the county's Park and Recreation budget—through discussions with DPR staff and letters to the County Board. On the budget, our emphasis focused on the need to preserve natural resources, including the county's trees. On the capital improvement process, we focused on the need for additional land acquisition, coordinated storm water/open space planning, and scrutiny of the county's spending on NOVA parks.

**Field Fees:** PRC members participated in the DPR/Sports Commission working group to evaluate the source and disposition of fees collected from field-using sports participants.

**Land Acquisition:** The commission continued to pursue its ongoing interest in promoting additional land acquisition for recreation and public spaces through support of the principles and land target listings provided by the new PSMP. We produced correspondence in support of possible park land acquisition at the Rouse property on Wilson Boulevard.

**Site Plan and other Planning Processes:** Several PRC members participated in planning commission-sponsored meetings to offer input on the open space aspects of private and public building projects. These included SPRCs, PFRCs, Special GLUP, and PDSP processes. Our approach has been to 1) engage in early discussions with staff, planning and other commissioners, and affected neighbors 2) provide oral comments at public meetings, 3) provide written comments, including letters to the County Board, and 4) testify at Planning Commission and County Board meetings. Attached are a list of involved projects.

**Biophilic Arlington:** PRC members continued support and advice for the county's efforts to join the network of biophilic cities. The county officially joined the network in April, 2020. We worked with other commissions and staff to begin formulating guidelines and policies that direct planning and design in both publicly and privately owned properties. A major approach has been to engage with county staff and other SPRC and PFRC participants as a project is being formulated.

**Apply Design Guidelines, Standards, and Needs Assessment Process for Privately Owned Public Spaces:** As advocated by the commission, a distinct section (appendix) of the PSMP discusses the importance of a specific set of guidelines and objective standards for determining and designing public space needs at privately-owned sites. These guidelines, including references to biophilic principles are already being applied by the commission and staff during SPRC and other planning discussions.

**Privately Owned Public Spaces:** The commission has continued to support the continuation of past efforts of the Department of Community Planning, Housing (CPHD) to develop an inventory of privately-owned public spaces. In our November budget guidance letter we supported the Manager's initial plan to include such an effort in its 2021 work plan. We believe it is important to understand what we already have in order to make better decisions about additional public spaces we need during the development process.

The following are additional areas of accomplishment:

**Participate in area and sector planning processes:** PRC members participated in area and sector plan groups such as the Career Center Working Group, the Plan Lee Highway initiative, the Pentagon City Special GLUP study, and the Crystal City Citizen Review Council.

**Enhance coordination with other commissions and committees on areas of overlapping interest:** PRC members served as liaisons to ensure close working relationships on issues of mutual interest with other commissions such as Sports, Planning (SPRC and LRPC), Forestry and Natural Resources, Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group,



the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, the Senior Adult Advisory Committee, the Crystal City Citizens Review Council, and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Members regularly attended other commission's meetings and provided reports that were used in PRC discussions.

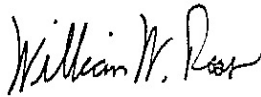
We also worked with the Forestry and Natural Resources and the Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission to support their charter modifications.

**The Bill Thomas Award:** At its October, 2020 meeting the commission honored Elaine Mills as the 2019 winner of the Bill Thomas Award in honor of residents supporting Arlington parks.

**Park Naming/Renaming Review:** The commission worked with DPR staff as to lead community discussions in the naming of three parks in Arlington. In all cases, the new names involved persons of color who had distinguished themselves as county residents.

Attached is a summary of accomplishments in 2020 where the commission participated with the community, deliberated, produced letters, or provided testimony. PRC members have continued to contribute enormous time, talent and expertise over the past year and it is a privilege to work with such a dedicated group of citizens. Likewise, we are grateful for the many talented and dedicated staff with whom we work, both within the Department of Parks and Recreation and in the other county departments.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Arlington County.  
Sincerely,



William Ross, Chair  
Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board  
Members, Planning Commission  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Claude Williamson, Director, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development

# **PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION 2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **PARK AND RECREATION PLANNING PROCESSES**

- Metropolitan Park – Park Planning
- 3901 Fairfax Drive
- S. Eads St./Army-Navy Drive Park – Park Planning
- Gateway Park – Temporary Dog Park
- Virginia Highlands Park -- Temporary Dog Park and Urban Agriculture Project
- Long Bridge Park

## **PARTICIPATION IN WORK GROUPS, TASK FORCES AND OTHER COMMISSIONS**

- Sports Commission
- Forestry & Natural Resources Commission
- Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG)
- Crystal City Citizen Review Council
- Plan Lee Highway Working Group
- PSMP Implementation Advisory Committee
- Neighborhood Conservation Program Review Working Group
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Senior Adult Advisory Committee

## **SITE PLAN/LRPC REVIEW PROCESSES**

- Ames Center
- 12<sup>th</sup> St. South
- 1900 Crystal Drive
- WETA/Village at Shirlington
- Park Arlington at Courthouse
- Landmark Block – Courthouse
- Pentagon City - PDSP
- Pershing Drive Special GLUP Study
- Verizon/11<sup>th</sup> St.
- Key Bridge Marriott
- Artis Senior Living
- Clarendon Sector Plan
- 2001 Clark St. South
- Ft. Henry Gardens
- Crystal City Heights Study

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES REVIEW PROCESSES**

- Fire Station #8
- Career Center

**PARK NAMING REVIEW**

- Trove Park (Silina Gray)
- Robinson Town Square
- Zitkala-Si Park

**BILL THOMAS SERVICE AWARDS**

- Elaine Mills

**ADDITIONAL PRC MEETING PRESENTATIONS**

- DPR Recreation Programs
- DPR Budget Plans
- Green Building Update
- Deer Impacts
- Park Steward Program
- Lubber Run/Long Bridge Park Tours

DRAFT