

Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
January 28, 2021
Microsoft Teams meeting

Meeting Summary

Attendance

Phil Klingelhofer, Chair
John Carey
Nat Ames
Noreen Hannigan
Caroline Haynes
David Howell
Kit Norland
Steve Sockwell
Teresa Leonardo
Kate Donohue
Josh Handler

County and State Staff

Vincent Verweij, DPR
Richard Dooley, DESS
Steven Bernheisel, APS
Jim McGlone, VDOF

Guests

Mary Glass
Neil Blake
Bill Browning

Guests, Commissioners and Staff – Introductions and Sign-in

The meeting was held online, using Microsoft Teams.

Public Comment

Mary Glass spoke about Arlington Civic Federation's work on protecting tree canopy and getting new ideas from the Federation and working group. Mary shared the report with the commission. Through Mary, the President of CivFed asked for a non-voting member on the commission. Mary also spoke about the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan. Mary suggested special committees be set up for FNRP. Lastly, Mary mentioned the amendments to CBPA, through the State Water Control Board.

Community Energy Plan Implementation – Richard Dooley

Staff presented on the Community Energy Plan, and the draft Environmental Assessment Form.

Discussion included:

- Mitigating CO2 with trees, and including that in Environmental Assessments.
- What CO2 would be lost with tree canopy loss
- How is the model formulated, and how it uses the data
- Addressing behavior and the impact on human behavior (AC, transportation, etc.)
- More ambitious plans, in contrast with where the country is going.
- Solar Projects and Tree Loss in other Counties.
- Building Codes – Mass timber and carbon-negative buildings.

- Requiring solar panels on all new construction
- Leading by example
- Including more directed language on trees.
- Continuing avoiding tree removal for solar by focusing on commercial buildings, and not requiring solar on new builds.

Steve Bernheisel shared in the chat: “I believe building codes are generally adopted from codes for broader jurisdictions. There is significant lobbying for codes from all quarters. With like minded entities is the best way to affect changes in codes.”

Richard Dooley shared email address: energy@arlingtonva.us to send emails with additional information.

A letter was approved unanimously to include language on tree conservation and mitigation the mitigation plan. Commissioner Carey volunteered to write the letter.

NOVA Parks land stewardship, natural resource conservation and maintenance Letter – Phil Klingelhofer

Discussion of letter from NOVA Parks included the following topics:

- Not very well-put together letter, with little substance.
- Trash and Stormwater runoff issues
- Amusement Parks vs Natural Parks
- Climate benefit of natural spaces
- Transferring the land to County ownership
- Work with representatives from Board

Commissioner Howell suggested a letter be written to get more serious about land management, and to direct the Board to reach out to the other board.

No opposition was expressed to sending a letter to the County Board expressing concerns, and a letter was approved to be composed by Commissioner Handler, asking the County Board to direct NOVA Parks to have a better strategy and budget.

Accessory Dwelling Unit Update – Vincent Verweij

Vincent Verweij presented on approved permits for Accessory Dwelling Units.

Conversation included:

- Getting the number of permits submitted before July 2019 for comparison
- Avoiding larger redevelopment through ADU construction
- Do another check a year hence

State Legislation – Vincent Verweij

Vincent Verweij discussed SB1393, HB2042, and the State Water Control Board suggested changes.

A letter was approved unanimously to be sent to the County Board, asking for their support for tree legislation.

December Minutes and Commission Infrastructure (Work plan, Annual report, Memberships)

November minutes were approved unanimously

Staff Reports

Maintenance:

- Crews are chipping away at the leftover requests from the late summer and fall, and have gotten requests close to 170.

Planning:

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

Long-term planning

- Days Inn on Arlington Blvd – The Days Inn across from Fort Myer is proposed for redevelopment. Opportunities exist here to plant trees along an improved bike trail, as well as increase tree canopy and biophilic design on the project.

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

- New and under review:
 - **Crystal City Water Park** – 3rd submission plans were reviewed. Tree impact is still high.
 - Arlington View Terrace East (1420 S Rolfe St) – In Review. LDA is close to approval.
 - 241-251 Plaza – In review.
 - **2539/2549 N Ridgeview Rd (by-right)** – In Review. Tree impact is high.
 - Westmont Shopping Center (3233 Columbia Pike) - Under Review. Tree impact is minimal.
 - Potomac Yard PDSP Landbay C-East – In review (conceptual).
 - **1201 N Vernon St** – Plan is rejected due to excessive tree loss (clearcut lot).
 - **Crystal Substation Expansion** – In Review. Tree planting greatly exceeds the required target.

- **Courthouse Landmark Residential** – This site plan is being reviewed. Current tree canopy plans include trees on roofs.
- **Febrey-Lothrop-Rouse house (by-right)** – The demolition of this home and some trees on the site are being reviewed.
- Approved and under construction:
 - The Children’s School (4770 Lee Hwy) – Under construction.
 - Queen’s Court has completed its tree planting
 - Pen Place – The demolition of the Marriott at Pen Place was approved, and is underway

DES

- Donaldson Run Tributary A Outfall Restoration – In review and will have minimal tree impact.
- Walter Reed Dr + 5th St S – NC Stormwater Project – Construction is underway.
- **31st St S Parking Lot Expansion** – 90% plans are in review. Tree removal is high, but replanting will also be high.
- **2900 S Eads St** – DES is renovating a building and updating the landscape. Many invasive trees and plants will be removed from County land and replaced. Not all the trees will fit on site, so they will be planted in various parks nearby.
- Several other DES outfall projects are nearing the final stages of review.
- Several intersection improvement projects throughout the County are in review. Many have very minimal tree impacts.
- Fire Station 8 – Plans are being reviewed. This project has a relatively low tree impact, and proposed to replace all trees on site.

Parks

- Jennie Dean – Controls are still being installed and the construction trailer is in place.
- Rosslyn Highlands – Under construction.
- Henry Clay – A RFI was submitted to remove a small maple in conflict with a new retaining wall. A new maple will be planted in its place.
- Teardrop Parcel – Underwent public comment. Review of the public comment will occur within the next few weeks.
- Powhatan Springs – All tree stakes and tags were removed by staff.
- Bluemont – Bluemont junction repaving will now include the auxiliary paths to be replaced at the same time. Still low to no impact to trees.

By-right projects

- 4009 25th St N – The developer met staff requirements to remediate the violations performed before an LDA was issued. The permit will be issued soon.
- The private stream restoration in Arlington Village is complete and 30 whip tree plantings have been installed as a result of their violation.
- The Foreign Service Institute – Second submission plans were reviewed and rejected.

Schools

- The plan to install a large stormwater facility at Walter Reed School is being reviewed. Tree impact is very low.
- The temporary Fire Station at Wilson School will be demolished. There is no anticipated tree impact.

Federal

- The Arlington National Cemetery is working on final plans for the Columbia Pike realignment. This realignment will include street tree planting, along with a sidewalk and trail.

Tree Planting:

- Fall planting is complete and inspections are wrapping up. We planted 328 trees and 300+ small trees in a reforestation at Bon Air Park.
- Spring Planting planning is underway. We will be planting smaller trees in parks in greater density where we need to reestablish woodland, in collaboration with Natural Resources, as well installing larger trees in more open spaces and as street trees.
- A pilot effort to redirect foot traffic at Woodlawn Park to protect the riparian buffer is planned for spring.
- The Tree Canopy Fund review sessions have started. The first batch was completed on Tuesday, January 26, with another on February 4.

Outreach:

- The Arlington Forestry Facebook page is back online, and posts are being added again: <https://www.facebook.com/ArlingtonUrbanForestry>

Personnel:

- Several staff are attending ISA classes, aspiring to take the Certified Arborist certification test. The forestry team hopes to have members of their tree crew join the foresters in this certification.

Other:

- Staff are attending continuing education webinars as they are scheduled by various presenting agencies.
- Staff is working together with the trail manager to develop better standards for planting near paved trails.
- Staff submitted suggested updates to the Mid-Atlantic Species Rating guide, a guide which values different species, based on their aesthetic, environmental, and structural qualities.

Commissioner reports

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Staff and consultants reported on some of the key findings from the public engagement and the benchmarking research. Extending the survey deadline to December 23 resulted in a strong public response. On the benchmarking, one notable point is that none of the other communities surveyed have taken the broader approach of integrating forestry and natural resources management plans, so Arlington may be a first on that front.

One issue that we have discussed in both FNRC (formerly UFC) and NRJAG is the ecological impact of the creation of informal trails, from off trail use by both pedestrians and mountain bikers. Recreation Ecologist Jeffery Marion, PhD, with Virginia Tech and US Geological Survey will be speaking at the NRJAG meeting this Monday, February 1. He forwarded a number of research pieces on this topic, several of which are attached. FNRC members are welcome to attend Monday's NRJAG meeting.

Park and Recreation Commission (David Howell)

The Park and Recreation Commission's January meeting included four primary agenda items.

1) An overview of the Community Energy Plan Implementation Framework, by Richard Dooley, DES. This is the same item as is slated for our FNRC meeting. The CEPIF has numerous elements only some of which are able to be covered in this presentation. It is recommended that FNRC members review the proposed framework (attached below) for topics of particular interest, as time does not allow comprehensive coverage.

2) Presentation on the development project at 2050 Wilson Blvd (aka Courthouse Landmark Block, by representatives from Greystar, Cooper Gary and LandDesign. This development proposal is for the area of low-rise buildings north (across Clarendon Blvd) from the Courthouse parking lot. The project site is .95 acres, and the new building will be 20 stories. For more information, see the web page at: <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/courthouse-landmark-block/> This is of interest to PRC in part because of its proximity to the sector plan's anticipation that the parking lot will eventually become a town square/park, as depicted in the two excerpted slides attached below.

3) Discussion of a draft letter from PRC on the County Manager's draft policy for naming/renaming parks, facilities and streets.

4) Discussion and approval of the 2020 Annual Report and the 2021 Plan of Action for the Park and Recreation Commission.

Documents for item 3 and 4 can be found on the commission web page at: <https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/parks-recreation-commission/>

Planning Activities Notification

No report

Biophilic Cities Network

Staff continues planning for a Spring symposium on how Arlington intends to incorporate the goals of the Biophilic Resolution into future county planning and projects. The first symposium will likely be directed internally for county staff with a public symposium held at a later date.

Lee Highway (Caroline Haynes)

The next Community Forum meeting conflicts with tonight's Forestry and Natural Resources meeting. The focus of the meeting is to roll out the planned virtual neighborhood meetings that are scheduled to begin mid-February.

Tree Stewards (Kate Donohue)

- Pruning was done at Carlin Springs Elementary School
- Invasive removal events were held at Mary Carlin Woods, Brandymore Castle, and Lacey Woods Park

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Kit Norland)

No report

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

- All trees for the Fall 2020 planting are in the ground.
- 240 applications were received for trees to be planted this spring. Representatives from FNRC, Tree Stewards, EcoAction Arlington, and Urban Forestry are in the process of meeting to review the applications. Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (Phil Klingelhofer)

No report

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (Teresa Leonardo)

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

New Business

Commissioner Handler spoke about suggesting outreach to Amazon about the Febrey House.

Vincent Verweij will reach out for interest on site plan review meetings with commissioners and staff.

Commissioner Handler asked about how to communicate with residents concerned about 401 S Jefferson St. The Chair suggested a thank you email is appropriate.