

Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
February 25, 2021
Staff and Commission Reports

Staff Reports

Maintenance:

- Tree crews and maintenance contractor are continuing to work on backlog of maintenance requests. Despite interruptions from snow clearing, net total requests is still going down, at around 130 at this point.

Planning:

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

Long-term planning

- **Lee Highway study** – Staff is working with the contractor on proposed tree canopy targets for the study area.

Site plans (special exception and by-right)

New and under review:

- Westmont Shopping Center – Plans are in review. Tree impact is low.
- **Pen Place, Future Amazon HQ** – Plans are in review.
- **241-251 Plaza** – Plans are in review. Much of the site will be getting added vegetation.

Approved and under construction:

- **Crystal Substation Expansion** – CEP was accepted. Landscape Plan still under review but is nearing completion. Tree impact is moderate. Tree planting is very high.
- 1731 N Veitch St, Colonial Village Townhomes – Under construction.
- 4001 Fairfax Dr, Bright Horizons – Plans accepted.

DES

- **31st St S Parking Lot Expansion** – Plans have been accepted. Tree removal is high, but replanting is also high.
- Lynnbrook Property Stormwater Improvements – Plans are nearing completion. One deteriorated walnut tree will be removed with tree planting to occur on private property, with additional trees planted at a nearby park (leftover that won't fit on site).
- N Woodrow St Outfall Repair – In review.
- **26th St N Outfall Repair** – Plans approved. Tree planting (on Nova Parks property) is very high.
- S Courthouse & S Walter Reed Pedestrian and Bike Trail Improvements – Plans were accepted and all trees in that vicinity are being saved and protected.
- Four Mile Run Dredging Project – Plans are nearly accepted. Tree impact will be minimal.

- Several intersection improvement projects, watermain replacements, and bus stop projects throughout the County were approved and/or in review. Most have very minimal tree impacts.
- The Virginia Hospital site along Carlin Springs got approval from forestry for the demolition of the site. The plan conserves 93 trees, plants 132 trees, and removes 87 trees. Many of the removed trees are small ornamentals or trees in low condition.

Parks

- Jennie Dean – Tree Protection Fencing and E&S Controls are installed. The contractor is demolishing the playground and ball field.
- New Park aka Teardrop Parcel – A new concept plan was presented that preserves the existing mature cottonwood better. Staff are on board with the new concept and are developing that plan.
- **Marcey Road Park** – In review. Nearing plan completion. Tree planting via reforestation is a major component of this project.
- Long Bridge Aquatic Center – Trees are being planted on site. The 500+ trees planted at the Pentagon are still doing great.

By-right projects

- **2539/2549 N Ridgeview Rd CEP** – Plans are in the first review cycle. This lot is heavily forested; however, tree impact is still being determined.
- 523 24th St S, Garrison Residence – Plans are in review and are rejected.

Schools

- Walter Reed school “topped off” their building. Tree protection remains in place.

Federal

- Staff is working with the Department of Defense to create an appropriate streetscape along the new cemetery expansion site.

Tree Planting:

- The Tree Canopy Fund review sessions were completed. Adam Lipera, with the assistance from three Tree Stewards, tagged trees at White House Native Nursery on 2/23/2021. The trees will be dug 2/26/2021 - 2/28/2021.
- An order for six hundred twenty-five trees for spring planting was placed. We are planting less than 5% non-native trees. Going forward we are looking at ways to broaden the species we use, and the utilize native cultivars rather than non-natives where the situation requires alternate tree forms.

Outreach:

- Responses to the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan have been received, and are being tagged based on topic area.

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:

- Nora Palmatier's Champion Specimen Southern Red Oak did not survive the winter, and was removed, with staff approval. Nora had spent years nursing this tree through decline and had scores of arborists look at it. Unfortunately, oak decline and other factors ultimately brought it down.
- DES And DPR staff discussed potential options for exploring the use of County mulch and compost for soil profile rebuilding, as an option for private contractors or public projects to use.
- Staff is continuing to research the effectiveness of Stormwater tree pits, and are investigating sites to see potential issues and solutions.

Commissioner reports

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

At the February NRJAG meeting, Jeffery Marion, PhD., Recreation Ecologist, U.S. Geological Survey, VA Tech Field Ecologist and Adjunct Full Professor spoke about his research findings and discussion on the environmental impacts of informal trails in protected areas. He emphasized the importance of GIS mapping of known trails to understand where the worst damage is occurring, what are the most sensitive areas that need to be protected, and which trails could possibly be modified to be officially sanctioned. Several members of MORE (Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts) also spoke during public comment, advocating for mountain biking in Arlington.

Park and Recreation Commission (David Howell)

The February PRC agenda included three presentations. These presentations are available on the PRC web page. Beginning with this month, all virtual meetings are being recorded. You can follow these topics easily on the video, which occurred approximately at the time indicated on the agenda.

Discussion on Hardscape and Construction Considerations on Public Space Projects [Bernadette Grullón, DPR] (7:15-7:30) This presentation provided background information on the various plans, standards, regulations, guidelines and similar considerations for the design and construction of public parks, as well as an overview of the park planning process.

Update on the Livability22202 Open Space Report [Carol Fuller and Mike Dowell, Livability22202] (7:30-8:00) This presentation was an overview of an ongoing initiative among

three Crystal City area civic associations, county staff, and others, to create goals and preferences that could/should guide future development in that dense corridor. It is a worthy example of organized and thoughtful citizen engagement, and is worth a view from that perspective as well as for FNR substantive ideas.

Update on Crystal City Water Park Site Plan Amendment [JBG Smith] (8:00-8:40) This presentation paralleled applicant briefings on parks and development projects, but is a privately owned spaced that the owner wants to “activate” with some small retail and also upgrade. It is a minor site plan change, so not subject to much official control that did not already apply to the existing park. However, there is a desire to obtain community input and support, and meetings with civic associations and others have been held.

Planning Activities Notification

Crystal Plaza (2001 Clark St.)

At a Site Plan Review Comm. on Feb. 18, I provided comments. Basically this is a development project at the northern part of Crystal City that consists of two buildings. There’s not a lot of wooded area at issue, though there are some onsite trees. I commented on the proposal to build a pedestrian walkway (a good thing) that would use space designated as green space under the Crystal City Sector Plan. Because the pedestrian walkway used a lot of hardscape, I suggested eliminating the hardscape and generally making the walkway much greener.

Clarendon Sector Plan Update

There was no meeting, but staff asked for comments on planning. Part of the proposal is to covert a portion of Fairfax Dr. into a linear park. The plan would convert about 30,000 sq. feet of space. Most of the area would be park although a one lane road would continue to provide vehicular access. I said we would enthusiastically support that portion of the update. However, staff also wanted reaction to density and massing proposals. All of the landowners want both more height and density than currently proposed under the Sector Plan. I objected to some of the more egregious examples with specific comments.

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 last community meeting conflicted with the January FNRC, so I did not attend. Consultants and staff are holding a series of meetings with neighborhood groups and private property owners to understand short-term and long-term plans and explore possible land use alternatives along the corridor.

Tree Stewards (Kate Donohue)

No update

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Kit Norland)

No report

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

No report

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

Met Monday, Feb. 1, 2021; however I did not attend due to the conflict with the NRJAG meeting during which Jeffery Marion presented information on assessing impacts of hiking and mountain biking on natural trails. Since no one else from the BAC was able to attend the NRJAG presentation, I provided them the reports, studies, etc., that Mr. Marion had supplied as background information, and wrote a brief summary of main points of the Zoom presentation. The BAC posted that summary to their ListServ. I am not aware of any official response at this time.

Arlington Tree Action Group

No report

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (Phil Klingelhofer)

The Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) held its February meeting on February 11, 2021.

The agenda items relevant to FNRC included:

- Update on Amazon and Other Related Planning Initiatives on the 22202 ZipCode Area (Crystal City) by Matt Mattauszek, Development Master Planner, Planning Division, Community Planning, Housing and Development (presentation attached)
- Whitetail Deer in Northern Virginia, Bill Browning, Arlington Regional Master Naturalist (presentation attached)

The meeting was recorded and can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdseCJoZGtM&feature=youtu.be>

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (Teresa Leonardo)

At the last C2E2 there was a presentation/consultation on the FNRP (going through the list of questions that has also been discussed with other commissions, we approved a letter calling for

establishment of a Chief Climate Change and Sustainability Officer in the County Manager's Office, we approved a letter expressing concern with the CEPIF update (asking for a more detailed and trackable roadmap), and we began discussing the FY22 budget (and will discuss a related letter at the March meeting).

Virginia Department of Forestry (Jim McGlone)

No report

Arlington Public Schools (Jim Meikle)

No report

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Kirsten Ann Conrad)

No report