

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group

Minutes 2-1-21

The virtual meeting was called to order at 7pm.

In attendance were: Caroline Haynes, Phil Klingelhofer (FNRC), Jill Barker, Colt Gregory, Dave Howell (Park & Rec), Teresa Leonardo, Claire O’Dea (C2E2), Jeff Marion (Speaker), Theresa Hyslop, Larry Wiseman (FNRP Contractors), Alonso Abugattas, Ryan Delaney, David Farner, Jennifer Fioretti, Jennifer Soles, Vincent Verweij (DPR), Neil Blake, Rick Fulgencio, Mary Glass, Marion Jordan, Noreen Hannigan, Hugh Robinson, Ernest Rodriguez, Bill Ross, Gary Shinnners, and Jonathan Walsh (Public)

Four Public Comments were heard:

1. Rick Fulgencio spoke on behalf of Arlington Trails in favor for allowing bikes on natural trails. That as far as he knew, there were no other local jurisdictions that did not allow for bikes on trails.
2. Neil Blake representing MORE (Mid Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts) also spoke in favor of mountain biking on trails similar to other jurisdictions.
3. Mary Glass speaking on behalf of herself, repeated her request for an updated GIS tree inventory of Arlington.
4. Ernest Rodriguez, also representing MORE (Mid Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts) as their president, supporting bikes on trails. He spoke about community demand for opportunities off road biking and forming a manageable plan.

The January 11, 2021 Minutes were accepted with no further comments.

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. Although the talk focused on all the trail uses of informal trails, the questions he answered were directly related to mountain biking. He talked of the importance of a GIS mapping of known trails to know 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. He also expressed the importance of establishing clear rules and ensuring that the rules are consistently enforced. Dr. Marion highlighted some of the best ways to develop trails in a sustainable fashion and ways to discourage off-trail use (including signage, brushing, and barriers). He encouraged including the International Mountain Biking Association in any discussions. He also said that many mountain bikers, though there many different kinds with different needs, require 15-25 miles of trails, and that may not be possible in such a land constrained county such as Arlington. He noted the importance of including all park users in the discussions and development of policies relating to approved uses within parks.

Staff Updates

David Farner reported on progress on the FNRP, including the wrap-up of benchmarking and the engagement process.

Member Updates

Colt Gregory (Park & Rec) reported that Pak & Rec has requested retaining park naming responsibilities and that an update of the Community Energy Plan (CEP) was presented.

Phil Klingelhofer (FNRC) reported that the commission also heard the presentation on the CEP and will be sending a letter to the board with comments. The commission also heard an overview of state legislatures on tree preservation.

Teresa Leonardo (C2E2) informed that they were reviewing CEP and that four new member applications have been received to fill a similar number of openings.