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

5/23/24

The **FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION** convened its meeting at 7:00 **PM** on 5/23/24.

PRESENT (IN-PERSON) Phil Klingelhofer, David Howell, Bill Browning, Steve Sockwell, Bob Benson, Elizabeth Gearin, Kate Donohue, Noreen Hannigan, John Carey, Mikaila Milton, Josh Handler

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY)

ABSENT Caroline Haynes, Neal Hunter

STAFF Vincent Verweij (DPR), Jacob Zielinski (VDOF), Steven Bernheisel (APS)

MOTIONS & ACTIONS/VOTES

Public Comment

Mary Glass spoke about the funding for tree maintenance. Asked to aim funding towards preservation, and using risk assessment to conserve our tree canopy.

Hannah Hein spoke about having recently moved to South Arlington. The home has about 100 ft of bamboo planted along the property. Causing significant maintenance issues. Met with Susan Cunningham. Asked for Virginia ordinance to prohibit running bamboo to be enacted in Arlington. Suggested other neighbors are experiencing the same issue.

Introductions

Deer Management Program – Jennifer Fioretti

Jennifer Fioretti spoke about an update to the Deer Management Program.

Questions followed from commissioner Sockwell about what happens regionally, and how collaboration with other jurisdictions will help with this issue. Benchmarking was performed with area jurisdictions, including National Park Service, and a map was created to show ongoing management methods in those jurisdictions. Management program will require ongoing monitoring and management.

Commissioner Carey asked about what is being finalized. End of Spring it will be released. How different will the staff and consultant report be?

Commissioner Gearin asked about who is making the recommendations. John Marlin, Alonso Abugattas, Jennifer Soles, Jennifer Fioretti, Jane Rudolph, and the manager's office.

Commissioner Milton asked about how the monitoring will be performed. The report will suggest how monitoring should be approached.

Commissioner Browning asked about when the draft recommendations will be done. They will be done before the summer engagement.

Jennifer Fioretti provided some context on Running Bamboo

Commissioner Milton asked a clarifying question about timing and Virginia laws on how culling could work, legally. Local code would need to be amended to permit professional bow hunting or sharpshooting. Permits would be required, management may be focused in the winter time. Commissioner Browning spoke about hunting laws.

Commissioner Browning spoke about an apparent silence from the Animal Welfare League of Arlington. The recommendations will be from County Staff only.

A discussion followed on whether a letter needed to be sent. The commission agreed not to send a letter.

Current Lot Coverage and Zoning Regulations – Kimberly Kalaha

Kimberly Kalaha presented on lot coverage and zoning regulations.

Commissioner Hannigan asked about why it matters how high something off the ground is. Kimberly did not have the background for this question, but it could be found through study.

Commissioner Benson asked about the detached garage option. Kimberly spoke about how the intent of the rear detached garage was to push vehicles farther back in the lot.

Commissioner Handler asked about whether this also applies to properties that allow Extended Housing Option, and what would need to change to reduce lot coverage. Many of those decisions start in comprehensive planning. For example, patios are not always counted right now, and they could be counted in the future. Extended Housing option appears to get the same lot coverage, and no detached garage.

Commissioner Benson spoke about context about current process of performing a lot coverage study. He spoke to the planning director, Anthony Fusarelli, to get the Commission involved. He asked for the program to stay on the fast track, and to involve the commission.

The commission agreed to have Commissioner Benson represent the commission on this issue.

CIP Discussion and letter

Chair Klingelhofer described the sequencing of the meeting and letter. Commissioner Carey offered to write the letter.

Commissioner Benson highlighted green infrastructure and acquisition. Commissioner Browning suggested nature center improvements. Commissioner Handler suggested tying the CIP letter to FNRP goals. Commissioner Milton asked about whether hiring people for lot coverage study needed to be in the CIP, but that is in the general budget, not CIP. Commissioner Howell suggested that every capital improvement should be screened for biophilic and green enhancements, and prioritizing those with high

percentages of these aspects. Commissioner Handler spoke about the native plant recommendation might fit into this budget.

Chair Klingelhofer suggested focusing on FNRP action steps and prioritizing natural components to the CIP. Prioritize acquiring land. Commissioner Milton asked about for which priorities (stormwater or biodiversity) land is to be acquired.

Commissioner Milton suggested integrating dark sky compliance in the CIP letter.

Commissioner Donohue asked for a presentation about how land is acquired. Some properties were identified in the Public Spaces Master Plan.

Commissioner Hannigan asked about how the flood-prone stormwater homes are acquired.

Commissioner Carey will provide a draft for review by the Commission for a June completion.

Tree Canopy Scope of Work

Vincent presented on tree canopy assessment technologies and the scope of work

Questions followed on the raw data, the technologies used, and what will be captured.

Arlington Public Schools Strategic Plan

Commissioner Howell spoke about the APS strategic plan. Staff is working on a report until June. The plan is to meet all state requirements. There is interest in nature and providing activities for children in nature. This will evolve over time. He offered standard language to use by commissioners, in case they are interested in getting involved in this issue.

Commissioner Benson spoke about the collaboration with Steve Sockwell and Cathy Lin to provide innovation on sharing and improving resources.

Barcroft Apartments

Commissioner Howell spoke about the timeline. A draft will be discussed, approved, and sent in June.

Commissioner Benson spoke about improvements to the plan. Noted a concern that the July meeting will bake in the requested improvements.

Commissioner Howell asked Commissioner Gearin about process after the July approval. This will not have a SPRC-like process. Commissioner Gearin suggested focusing on the key items the commission works to achieve.

Commissioner Howell will be writing the draft letter, with support from Commissioners Haynes and Benson, separately.

April Minutes and Commission Infrastructure

April Minutes were approved unanimously.

Chair Klingelhofer spoke about Melody Mobley's resignation from the Commission, and spoke about having a second representative on Gulf Branch process. Commissioners Hannigan and Benson expressed interest.

Commissioner Donohue offered to be part of the Notable Tree Subcommittee to replace outgoing Commissioner Mobley

Staff Reports

Vincent reported on the tree canopy report, circuit maintenance, and tree dieback on planted trees.

Commissioner Reports

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

Not much to report for May. NRJAG members did meet earlier this month and the discussion focused on possible organizational structure going forward. We have scheduled a meeting for June 3 to get an update on the implementation of the FNRP, as well as the deer management plan and tree canopy survey. In addition to the quarterly meetings for updates on the FNRP, NRJAG members are exploring broadening the group to have alternating quarterly meetings with a larger resiliency and sustainability focus.

Park and Recreation Commission (Neal Hunter)

No report

Public Spaces Master Plan Implementation Advisory Group (Caroline Haynes)

No report

Planning Activities/SPRC (Steve Sockwell, Caroline Haynes, Kate Donohue, David Howell, Bob Benson)

Commissioner Sockwell:

Nothing to report. A slow month. I would note that the Planning Commission and the County Board unanimously voted to accept the report on the Melrose 23rd Street site Special GLUP Study- despite the strong opposition of the neighboring civic association (Aurora Highlands.) SPRCs will start, but no schedule is out.

Commissioners Howell, Donohue, Benson, and Haynes:

No reports on planning activities.

Parks Review Subcommittee

There is nothing new to report on park development or environmental projects since the April meeting.

Public Facilities Review Commission (Kate Donohue)

No report

Tree Stewards (Noreen Hannigan)

Tree Stewards of Arlington and Alexandria have been working on invasives removals and tree plantings at sites in the County, such as Fort Scott, Powhatan Springs, and Dominion Hills. In addition Tree Stewards participated in City Nature Challenge at sites in the County (such as Lacey Woods and Fort C.F. Smith).

Some Tree Stewards will also be attending the Trees Virginia Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable event in Alexandria on May 30. Speakers include Vincent Verweij.

A Fall 2024 Tree Steward Training Class is in the works. The application period will be announced this summer.

Tree Canopy Fund (Kate Donohue)

The next application period for trees planted this fall is scheduled to open June 3, and close June 28. Details about the species list and application process can be found on the Eco Action Arlington website at [Tree Planting Program \(ecoactionarlington.org\)](https://ecoactionarlington.org).

Bicycle Advisory Committee (Noreen Hannigan)

The Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) met on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, in joint session with the Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Mr. Dan Nabors, Transportation Engineering and Operations Bureau Chief, briefed the committees on recent changes to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and upgrades the county is implementing to meet the current standards.

Mr. Nate Graham (Communications Specialist, DES) spoke on the procedures involving Maintenance of Travel (MOT) on County streets (for example, keeping sidewalks and bike lanes safe and passable around construction sites).

Ms. Mary Dallao (Walk & Bike Arlington) noted that registration for this year's Bike To Work Day (held on May 17) was higher than in previous years.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable (Vincent Verweij)

A roundtable will be held on May 30

Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee (ArNac) (Phil Klingelhofer)

No report

Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission (Mikaila Milton)

C2E2 met on Monday, May 20. The new chairperson is Cindy Lewin. The commission heard a presentation by Kate Beysse, Sustainability Manager with Turner Construction and a presentation by Demetra McBride on the Risk Assessment and Management Plan for Arlington. The RAMP

presentation slides are attached. Cindy would like to start approving meeting minutes via e-mail to allow more time for discussion.

Virginia Department of Forestry (Jacob Zielinski)

No report

Arlington Public Schools (Steven Bernheisel)

Contractors took down 2 silver maples at Cardinal Elementary, and will be replaced. APS will be working with Commissioner Benson and APS to improve coordination. Arlington Career Center's permits are being completed.

Commissioner Milton asked about watering trees on APS properties.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (Kirsten Conrad)

New Business:

Commissioner Handler asked about the Natural Trails study. A presentation will be given in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 PM.