

**Urban Forestry Commission
January 24, 2013
Meeting Summary**

Attendance

Dean Amel
Larry Finch
Nora Palmatier
Ed Hilz
Mikaila Milton
Caroline Haynes
Janet Nuzum
Elizabeth Rives
Mary Ann Lawler

State and County Staff

Vincent Verweij, DPR
Jamie Bartalon, DPR
Jim McGlone, VDOF

Guests

Paul Campanella

Public Comment –

Paul Campanella informed commission members that staff in the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 3 Office is investigating whether an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is necessary for Arlington National Cemetery's Millennium Project. Dean Amel noted that the Urban Forestry Commission's (UFC) comment letter on the draft Environmental Assessment was submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers before the deadline for public comments. The Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) and the Park and Recreation Commission will also be submitting comments. Although their letters will be submitted after the official deadline for public comments, their comments will probably still be accepted.

Stormwater and Urban Forestry (Master's Project) – Vincent Verweij, DPR

Vincent Verweij (Urban Forester, DPR) presented a summary of his Master's degree project. The project used a GIS model to determine high priority sites for tree planting in Arlington, based on the benefits that the plantings would contribute to mitigating stormwater run-off. This topic is particularly relevant as regulatory and legislative incentives for tree plantings that reduce stormwater run-off are currently being considered.

The model focused on identifying sites for tree planting within Resource Protection Areas (RPA's) where existing tree canopy and impervious surfaces would not limit planting opportunities, and where benefits would be maximized. It assigned higher priority to potential planting sites adjacent to contiguous forested areas.

The analyses based upon the model found relatively few high priority planting sites within RPA's. This is due in part to the fact that RPA's already have an average of 69% tree canopy coverage, reducing the opportunities (and priority) for future tree plantings. When high priority planting sites within RPA's were categorized by public/private ownership, a total of 98 acres of

public land and 71 acres of privately owned land were identified. Mr. Verweij noted that the number of high priority tree planting sites would expand significantly if the analysis included areas within 500 feet of streams, rather than being limited to RPA's (which typically extend 100 feet from streams).

Based upon his analysis, Mr. Verweij recommends that conservation and maintenance of existing forests may be the best tools for using trees to reduce stormwater run-off on public lands. For privately owned land, educational outreach and partnerships with citizen groups; providing stormwater control credits as incentive for use of structural cells and improved soil conditions for tree planting; and, continuing the County's Tree Distribution Program and Tree Canopy Fund Grant Program are valuable ways to help mitigate stormwater run-off.

Caroline Haynes and other commission members noted that Mr. Verweij's study/presentation would make a very useful educational tool to highlight the benefits of trees and the need to preserve and enhance forested areas. Elizabeth Rives added that a version of the presentation would be very valuable for civic associations. For example, she noted that a presentation to the Barcroft community would make a compelling case for moving the community garden (currently located along the W&OD Trail near South Buchanan Street) to the other side of the trail beneath the power lines, and reforesting the current garden site.

Larry Finch noted that it would be interesting to expand the current analysis beyond the 100 foot RPA, and to also identify high priority areas with good tree canopy for conservation (not just planting).

Update on Arlington's Tree canopy – Vincent Verweij, DPR

Vincent Verweij shared a preliminary analysis of 2011 tree canopy coverage for Arlington, which was provided by Casey Trees. The 2011 satellite imagery and analysis is more accurate than the 2008 canopy data. This was illustrated by a hand-out that showed how the 2011 analysis was based on a more accurate shape of canopy covered areas, rather than the "jagged" edges of raster images used in the 2008 canopy analysis.

Maps showing canopy coverage by civic association in 2008, 2011, and % change (2008 to 2011) were distributed. The analysis based on 2008 satellite imagery showed that overall canopy coverage for Arlington (excluding federal lands) was about 43%. The 2011 imagery and analysis for the same area shows Arlington's tree canopy coverage to be about 40%. Although the comparison implies that there was a 3% decrease in canopy coverage, Mr. Verweij cautioned that a scientific comparison of canopy change is problematic, since different methodologies were used to analyze the two data sets.

Ed Hilz asked whether there is a way to determine the major causes of canopy change in different areas, such as whether it was due to development, storms, or other factors. Mr. Verweij felt that there may be a way to look for some correlations, but the 2011 data was just received and direct comparisons will be problematic (as noted above).

Dean Amel stressed the importance of using the new data to help set tree canopy goals in the Urban Forest Master Plan update. In addition to identifying areas that have experienced significant tree loss, the 2011 data should be used to set realistic/reasonable canopy goals within specific areas. Jim McGlone added that the distribution of impervious surfaces and an analysis of “plantable” spaces must also be considered when setting area-specific canopy goals.

Ed Hilz suggested that the 2008/2011 canopy coverage comparison by civic association could be provided to the associations and used to help target educational outreach efforts. Nora Palmatier added that effective outreach methods to reach the development community should be a priority.

Review of the 2012 UFC Work Plan and Development of the 2013 Plan

Dean Amel stated he does not feel there is anything in the 2012 UFC Work Plan that the commission should drop from the 2013 plan. He encouraged members to review the 2012 plan and suggest any additions or edits for consideration at the February UFC meeting, when the 2013 UFC Work Plan will be adopted.

Approval of December Minutes

Not all members of the commission received the December 20, 2012 draft UFC minutes due to a problem with Jamie Bartalon’s e-mail. Minutes will be distributed again for approval at the February UFC meeting.

Staff Reports

- Jamie Bartalon reported that an interdepartmental staff working group, which includes representatives from DPR, DES and CPHD, has been working on updating landscape standards for tree planting in urban areas. The DES Engineering Bureau has been particularly interested and involved in improving planting details for trees in sidewalk “pits”, including improved details for the use of continuous soil panels and Silva Cells. Some members of the staff working group will be meeting with Karen Kumm Morris, Caroline Haynes and Scott Brintzer on February 1 to discuss ideas for increasing soil volume for tree planting in urban corridors.
- DES will host an open house for the public to learn more about neighborhood stormwater projects. The open house will be held on January 29, 7 pm to 8:30 pm, at the Fairlington Community Center.
- Arlington’s Urban Agriculture Task Force is hosting a series of “Community Conversations” on urban agriculture issues as they work to prepare recommendations to the County Board. The “Conversations” are an opportunity to meet with Task Force members in an informal/drop-in setting to share ideas. The last two gatherings will be

held on January 26, 10:30 am to noon, at Westover Library, and on January 28, 7:30 pm to 9 pm, at Central Library auditorium.

- DPR's new director, Jane Rudolph, will attend the February 28 UFC meeting.
- Vincent Verweij announced that Casey Trees has begun a partnership with Arlington Public Schools for planting trees on school grounds. Casey Trees will be accepting applications from Arlington schools for fall tree plantings. Ed Hilz noted that the Public Facility Review Committee (PFRC) discussed the need for watering and maintaining trees on school grounds during their review of plans for the expansion of Ashlawn Elementary School.

Commission Member Reports

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group – Caroline Haynes reported that the Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) discussed Arlington National Cemetery's Millennium Project and expansion plan impacts on trees and natural resources. The NRJAG also discussed their 2013 Work Plan.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Jim McGlone announced that the next Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable will be held on February 28 in Falls Church. This roundtable will continue with the theme of stormwater management, and will include discussions of new stormwater regulations in Virginia.

Park and Recreation Commission – Caroline Haynes' Park and Recreation Commission report is attached.

Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris' Planning Activities report is attached.

Public Facilities Review Committee – Ed Hilz's Public Facilities Review Committee report is attached.

E2C2 – No Report. E2C2 meets next week.

Champion Trees Committee – No Report.

Tree Stewards – No Report.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier's Tree Canopy Fund Report is attached.

Ballston Pond Stakeholders Committee – No report.

Boathouse Planning – No Report.

NCAC – No Report.

Columbia Pike Form Based Code Advisory Working Group – Steve Campbell’s Columbia Pike Form Based Code Advisory Working Group report is attached.

Arlington Public Schools (APS) – No Report.

Virginia Department of Forestry – Jim McGlone (VDOT) reported that a judge recently ruled in favor of Fairfax County in a lawsuit between the county and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over stormwater flow into Accotink Creek. The EPA had sought to require that stormwater flow into the creek be reduced by 50% in order to address benthic impairment due to sediment deposition. However, a judge recently ruled that the (EPA) cannot regulate stormwater as a “pollutant”.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – No report.

New Business

- Dean Amel announced that, although a letter from the UFC encouraging tree preservation was sent to the Lacey Land Trust developer, all but about five trees have been removed from the site at the corner of North George Mason Drive and Washington Boulevard.
- Arlington’s Beautification Committee recently approved the designation of 19 Notable Trees. Dean Amel noted that the Beautification Committee needs additional members, and encouraged commission members and others to consider joining the committee.
- Dean Amel reported that the Long Bridge Park citizen working group is concerned about Zoning Ordinance requirements for parking and is closely following the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment. Construction of Phase 2 of the park (which includes a recreation and aquatics facility) is expected to begin in the fall of 2013. Concerns were also raised about the selection of plants to be installed during Phase 2, since a potentially invasive grass was installed during Phase 1. Alonso Abugattas (Natural Resource Manager, DPR) and Vincent Verweij (Urban Forester, DPR) are reviewing the proposed planting list.
- Dean Amel reported that there has been no resolution on County Board appointment of a new UFC member to fill a vacancy on the commission. He also noted that Larry Finch and Mary Ann Lawler will soon be leaving the commission. Members were encouraged to provide Mr. Amel with the names of any potential candidates for UFC appointment.

Attachments to January 24, 2013 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:

Park and Recreation Commission – Caroline Haynes

Summary of Jan. 22, 2013 Park and Recreation Commission meeting:

- Jane Rudolf, new DPR Director was introduced. This was primarily a meet and greet with very little substance covered.
- Briefed by CPHD on the North Quincy Street Plan addendum where efforts are being made to consolidate open space into one 1/2 acre park rather than several smaller parcels of land.
- Briefed on proposed zoning change with respect to parking for schools and recreational facilities (same presentation that UFC received).
- Discussed commission priorities for 2013 focusing on: 1) needs assessment for parks and open space; 2) including parks into 4.1 planning process; 3) developing siting policies; 4) preserving open space adjacent to Wilson School.
- Briefly discussed Arlington National Cemetery Millennium project.

Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris

The SPRC has met twice in January discussing the following projects.

1. **Penn Place**, a vacant 10 acre parcel along Army Navy Drive in Pentagon City, next to the Marriott Hotel. This is a multi-phased development owned by Vernado. Ultimately, 5 buildings (4 office bldg., 1 hotel, and ground floor retail along 12th Street), all high rises. There are 3 options for development, with open space plans that vary considerably due to the versions with or without "secure" buildings that have significant setbacks. From a UF perspective, all options have significant open space in which to have trees. The proposals all show significant tree planting in the passive open space. I have asked for a streetscape plan that views the 10 acres as a district with a diversity of species, including natives. There will be a public hearing probably by April or May. Community has issues with offices as the single use and lack of community oriented recreational space.
2. **Pierce Queen**, a 16 unit apartment building in Fort Myers Heights North Plan just up the hill from Rt. 50. Developed by an affordable housing developer, the Wesley Housing Development Corp. The existing garden apartment site is completely redeveloped except for 2 garden apartments along 12th Street that are preserved in accordance with the approved Plan. Also, the Plan calls for preservation of two mature trees along side these apartments that contribute "garden" character to the garden apartments. Historic preservation and affordable housing are the key goals of the Plan. The plan undergrounds existing over utility lines and proposes street trees along 12th, Queen and Pierce Streets. A significant increase in canopy over what is there today. SPRC members have significant issues with the building's bulk and mass given that the developer is asking for Affordable Housing and LEED bonus

density adding 25% more density than originally envisioned in the Plan. Will proceed to the Planning Commission in February.

This Saturday, the County Board will hear a request for advertising for the **North Quincy Street Plan Addendum** in Ballston. This plan covers not only North Quincy Street, the Founders Square building, Mosaic Park and the Mercedes dealership, but also the west side of Glebe Road between Carlyn Spring and the Hyde Park Apartments including the Harris Teeter. The plan shows street trees along all urban streets but with only a 16' building setback along Glebe Road.

When this plan was introduced before the Planning Commission last week, as a request to advertise, I asked what street typology is Glebe Road and what the Master Plan of Highways had designated as an appropriate building setback along such a street. If Glebe is considered an Arterial A with primarily retail-oriented Mixed Uses, then the Plan should be showing a pedestrian way of "10-16 ft. sidewalk, plus 6 ft landscape and furniture zone". That would mean providing a 16' to 22' sidewalk. Only a 16' sidewalk is quite minimum and doesn't match up well with the rest of Glebe in this Ballston area. This affects the canopy space for trees somewhat as well as the corridor of the street. The UFC could take a position on this for the sake of the trees but also for pedestrians to have sufficient sidewalk width. You could raise this issue before this Saturday just to let the County Board know that it is a concern. If the Plan proceeds without any revisions to the sidewalk width for ultimate review by the Planning Commission and the County Board, this issue gets harder to resolve.

With Dean Amel's approval, Scott B., Caroline H. and myself are meeting with Jamie B, Vincent V., Brett W. and perhaps other DES staff next week to discuss ways to increase soil volume for site plan street tree planting details, trees typically planted in a paved, urban sidewalk. The County is re-examining their landscape standards. We were able to have the caliper size reduced from 4 1/2 inch caliper to 3 1/2 inch last year. Now, we continue to request increasing the soil volume to achieve the canopy that we all envision and to have the street trees begin closer to the intersections (while still behind the line of sight). Please ask Jamie B. at the UFC meeting how this review is coming along.

Public Facilities Review Committee – Ed Hilz

The Public Facilities Review Committee met on Jan 15 regarding the expansion of Ashlawn Elementary School at 5950 8th Road North and on Jan 23 regarding the new elementary school that will be built on the grounds of Williamsburg Middle School at 3600 North Harrison Street.

Ashlawn Elementary School

- There will be a 20 percent increase in the size of the school (97,600 sf to 118,00 sf).
- 22 trees will be removed: (14) 3-6" caliper and 8 greater than 6" caliper.
- 74 trees will be planted: 50 shade trees and 24 ornamental.
- The landscape architect said that these numbers were estimates and that APS will be working with the Arlington County Urban Forester to determine the exact number of replacement trees that need to be planted according to County standards.

- Run-off from the entry drive will flow into two rain gardens. Rain gardens were chosen instead of having a pervious driveway because it would be too expansive to maintain a pervious driveway as it has to be vacuumed regularly.
- PFRC is considering having the maintenance of replacement trees be a site plan condition.
- Trees will also be planted in the outdoor learning area.

New Elementary School

- Building will be 93,578 sf and will be set back about 40-45 feet from the curb. It will be located along 36th Street North between Harrison Street and Kensington Street at the south end of the Williamsburg Middle School property.
- The number of trees that will be removed is unknown at this time. The chosen site will have the least impact on the trees that are on the property.
- Discussed and agreed on a concept plan for the school. Also discussed traffic issues that were of concern to the surrounding civic associations (Rock Springs, Williamsburg, and Yorktown) at four intersections: 36th & Harrison, 36th & Kensington, Williamsburg & Kensington, and Williamsburg & Harrison.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier

TTCF approved 241 trees and 231 trees were planted. Ten trees were not planted because the owner had moved, decided a tree wasn't wanted, the site had changed due to construction, or a tree that was supposed to be removed was not. Davey Tree did not charge for those cancelled. The breakdown of tree species and numbers by group are below.

Tree Species Breakdown	planted/ cancelled	GROUP	TREES APPROVED/ Cancelled
American Basswood/Linden	3	Alcova Heights	1
American Beech	6	Arlington Ridge	5
American Holly/cultivars	8/1	Ashton Heights	15
American Sycamore	5	Aurora Highlands	4/1
Bald Cypress	3	Carlin Springs Road Pipe stem	2
Black Tupelo/Black Gum	36	Cherrydale Citizens Association	15/1
Common Hackberry	7	Claremont Citizens Association	7
Downy Serviceberry	6	Donaldson Run Civic Association	0
		Langston-Brown/Hall's Hill High View	35/3
Eastern Red Cedar	4		
Eastern Redbud	9	Lyon Park Citizens Association	23
Flowering Dogwood	9	Penrose Neighborhood Association	14
Greenspire Linden	1	Rock Spring Civic Association	9/1
Male Ginkgo	2	Tara Leeway Civic Association	13/2
Pin Oak	7	Waycroft-Woodlawn	2

Red Maple	37/4	Williamsburg Civic Association	2
Red Oak	7/1	Arlington Oaks	14
River Birch	17/1	Arlington Partnership Aff. Housing	5
Scarlet Oak	7	Arlington Village Townhouse	5
Southern magnolia	2	Concord Mews Condominium	3
Sugar Maple	7/1	Condominiums at Courthouse Hill	1
Sweetbay Magnolia	4	Congregation Etz Hayim	1
Sweetgum	2	Danville 2400	1/1
Thornless Locust	2	Fairlington Arbor	1
Tuliptree	4/3	Fairlington Commons	13
Virginia Pine	4	First Church of Christ, Scientist	2
White Fringetree	6	Frederick Courts	12
White Oak	12	Heatherlea Condominiums	12
		Park Spring Condominium	
Willow Oak	10	Association	6
Winter King Hawthorn	4	RAFOM – 4 CONDOS	9
		The Arlington Condos	1/1
Totals Planted	231		

Tracking the tree planting was easier than last year partly because only half as many were planted, few species were not available and required substitution, and the spreadsheet format was better.

The planting process this year had water provided at most sites – homeowners and apartments provided the water. Stakes were not used this year – I saw several cases were those from last year were still present and asked the homeowner to remove them. Homeowners were asked to remove the stakes from last year and to water their trees the week after planting via several emails.

Davey Tree did do the replacement planting of trees from 2011 in January 2013. Three tree species had a very high replacement ratio and should be watched for this year: Black gum had 30 die of the 61 planted; White oaks had 7 die of the 21 planted and American beech had 4 die of the 11 planted and Northern red oak had 4 of 27 die. These could have been due to a particular nursery batch but should be carefully reviewed to see if spring planting or other change is required. All other species from fall 2011 had only 1 or 2 trees die, but should be tracked and compared to this year.

Next year's process:

1. More outreach targeted as certain neighborhoods – but if target Nauck with small yards at row houses should we allow small trees? Target more apartment buildings and HOAs?
2. On line application needs tweaking to be easier. Neighborhood coordinators found it labor intensive to enter each address, but the condo groups seemed fine. Coordinating the planting between the tree crew and homeowners is time consuming since several had incorrect emails and phone numbers entered into the application – if the individuals themselves entered the info it might reduce errors and show more commitment for the tree.

3. There was no review of trees in the nursery this year and little observation of the actual planting this year due to time constraints.
4. The process of approving applications was labor intensive for a few volunteers who looked at many sites on the ground. There also needs to be consensus on how much distance has to be between trees, away from overhead lines, etc. Not everyone was using the Casey Trees guidelines for distance from other trees, sidewalks, houses, etc but should they?
5. Application should be clear that site should be ready for planting at time of application – there cannot be a dead tree there or “to replace a dying tree”. One condominium never got their trees removed and another homeowner had massive roots that prohibited planting. Both were asked to prepare the site before reapplying this spring
6. Several neighborhoods and HOAs that have gotten many trees the last 3 years must be near capacity so our push should be to recruit new groups, and that depends on getting a volunteer coordinator.

Columbia Pike Form Based Code Advisory Working Group – Steve Campbell

The 1/9 meeting of Form-Based Code (FBC) AWG dealt with four basic topics (topic 4 most relevant to UFC):

1) How to write the Code so that it resolves most building height transitions issues between areas with different permitted height differences.

2) Criteria for architectural standards were discussed, especially as they relate to (historical) conservation areas (one aspect of historical properties is the mature trees growing there (usually at historic garden apartment complexes). Also to be resolved is how much of the area around such properties is to be protected. What the code permits will likely protect many mature trees, but put others at risk.

3) Criteria for 'Use Permit Review' (similar to Site Plan Review), which will apply to large projects (probably 40,000 sq. ft. plus). Examples of code exception requests that may concern UFC would be a) to modify streetscape details, or b) those that affect the inclusion (retention?) of mature trees in a proposed project.

The Use Permit Review process will also consider awarding bonus height to developments in specific areas along the Pike in exchange for public open space (similar to SPR).

4) OPEN SPACE 'Character'- This topic is most in line with UFC interests.

A slide was shown of "Proposed New Open Spaces" (slide #58 in the attachment/ presentation by Bethany Heim of DPR). A map of "Proposed Natural Areas" was also shown (slide #60). Some (probably many) of these proposed areas are currently private property, but through the FBC process the hope is to acquire them- part of an overall County plan to acquire property 'in perpetuity' we were told. The Form-Based Code would designate these as 'non-buildable'

parcels. That said, many of these are not large enough to install park amenities, and some have steep slopes.

Another aspect of "Proposed New Open Spaces" are proposed public Squares and Greens (these are isolated and easier to see in slide # 61). The two proposed squares, to be located on Columbia Pike, are to be smaller and have more impervious surface, with some trees as well. The proposed greens would be in residential areas, have more pervious surface, with lawns and trees. One architectural firm representative suggested the greens could be planted with lawns and trees initially, with the community determining any amenities to be installed later.

Please let me know if there are any questions or comments I should bring back to FBC AWG. An initial draft of FBC will be reviewed at the next meetings of AWG, 2/12 and 2/21.

Note related to the Washington Blvd Bike Trail- In reviewing the Columbia Pike Area Neighborhood Plan I came across a survey (pg. 2.11) taken during the charette process. Residents who attended a 'Hands-on Design session' were asked to name their three highest-priority needs. "Variety of open/green space" received a 42% response rate (tied for third), while "more bike facilities" came in last at 5%. "Other" received 8%. First was "support affordability and diversity in housing"; second was to "improve the pedestrian experience"; tied for third with "open/ green space" was "improve architectural continuity along the Pike".