

**Urban Forestry Commission
March 28, 2013
Meeting Summary**

Attendance

Dean Amel
Larry Finch
Nora Palmatier
Mikaila Milton
Caroline Haynes
Mary Ann Lawler
Scott Brinitzer
Steve Campbell
Janet Nuzum
Elizabeth Rives

State and County Staff

Vincent Verweij, DPR
Jamie Bartalon, DPR

Guests

Alex Sanders, E2C2
Brooke Alexander
Bernard Berne

Dean Amel announced that Mary Ann Lawler is retiring from the Urban Forestry Commission. Mary Ann informed the commission that this will be her last UFC meeting, and that she has enjoyed working with them over the years. She was originally appointed to the UFC in March, 2007. Commission members thanked her for her dedication and support.

Public Comment –

- Dr. Bernard Berne commented that the revised Environmental Assessment (EA) for Arlington National Cemetery’s Millennium project does not offer significantly improved options for reducing environmental impacts of the project. The EA still results in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), despite massive tree loss and stream valley degradation. He stressed that the only way to prevent the project from going forward as planned is to reverse the previous transfer of land (from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Defense) back to the Department of the Interior, and have Congress direct the Department of Defense to identify alternative sites for burial expansion.

Dr. Berne urged commission members, the County Board, and others to contact Senator Timothy Kaine and request that he pursue changes to the Defense Authorization Act of 2014 which would reverse the transfer of land (as described above). Senator Kaine is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which will meet to review the Defense Authorization Act in June.

- Brooke Alexander urged the UFC to submit comments addressing extensive tree loss associated VDOT projects along Washington Boulevard and Arlington Boulevard. In addition to mature trees that were removed by VDOT during the widening of Washington Boulevard, many more trees were removed from the Washington Boulevard/Arlington

Boulevard “cloverleaf” areas to provide space for VDOT to deposit road project “waste dirt” rather than hauling it to another location.

UFC Chair, Dean Amel, agreed that the commission would discuss this issue after “Staff Reports” during the current UFC meeting.

Revised EA for Arlington National Cemetery Millennium Project

The commission reviewed a draft letter (prepared by Caroline Haynes) providing comments on the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) Millennium Project revised Environmental Assessment (EA). Ms. Haynes will also provide comments on behalf of the commission at the April 4 meeting of the National Capital Planning Commission. She will also participate in a conference call on Tuesday, April 2, that will include representatives from approximately 10 organizations concerned about the environmental impacts of ANC’s Millennium Project.

Dean Amel, Caroline Haynes, Larry Finch and Steve Campbell attended an “open house” project briefing at Arlington National Cemetery on March 16. Mr. Amel noted that environmental impacts of the project would be greatly reduced if the proposed loop road did not cross the stream. Project representatives stated that the loop road is necessary to provide a circuit for horse-drawn caissons to move through the area during interment ceremonies. However, current plans include extra width to accommodate vehicle parking along the sides of the road. Steve Campbell commented that tree impacts would also be reduced if the columbarium planned to be constructed on the return loop were eliminated, and that portion of the loop road were shifted onto the columbarium’s proposed footprint.

Caroline Haynes noted that, although project representatives state that the expansion will accommodate burial demands for an additional 7 to 10 years, actual numbers indicate it will provide for only 4 to 6 years of burials.

Vincent Verweij informed the commission that staff are recommending mitigation measures for the project, including recommendations for additional tree planting and invasive species management that extends onto adjacent National Park Service property.

Brooke Alexander (meeting guest and former biologist with the Army Corps of Engineer’s Planning Division) suggested that the UFC comment letter should cite reasons that refute the EA’s Finding of No Significant Impact. If a full Environmental Impact Study is required, a much more detailed analysis of impacts will be performed. Ms. Alexander also recommended that the Chief of the Army Corps of Engineers should be copied on the UFC comment letter. Caroline Haynes will incorporate Ms. Alexander’s suggestions into the letter. The commission approved the letter with the revisions noted above.

Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan – Vincent Verweij, DPR

Vincent Verweij noted that he has provided input for the street tree sections of the draft of the Form Based Code for the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Plan. Steve Campbell represents the UFC on the Form Based Code Advisory Working Group and has been involved in the review process. Mr. Verweij showed some examples of streetscape sections along Columbia Pike and adjacent neighborhood streets. The widest sections of Columbia Pike will include a central median with trees. The width of tree lawns between the curb and sidewalk range from six feet to 8 feet.

Staff members Vincent Verweij, Alonso Abugattas, Sarah Archer and Greg Zell also provided input on street tree species. The vast majority of trees on the current list are native species. The plan calls for the use of alternating species on each side of a block so that expansive monocultures can be avoided.

Dean Amel asked whether the plan and streetscape standards will need to go through a County Board approval process. Vincent Verweij and Jamie Bartalon believe that the plan will need to be adopted by the County Board, but will verify the adoption process and anticipated timing.

Dean Amel moved that the commission support the draft streetscape standards. The motion was seconded and approved.

Draft County Recommended Tree Species List – Vincent Verweij, DPR

Vincent Verweij shared and discussed a draft list of County-recommended tree species that he has been working on with other staff members. The “master list” that he distributed will probably be sorted into more specialized use categories, such as trees recommended for use by developers, for use as street trees, for use by residents, and trees for use in highly urbanized areas.

Janet Nuzum recommended including a column that indicates a species’ rate of growth, rather than just the tree’s size at maturity (as currently listed), so that residents get a better picture of how long it will take a tree to reach a given size. Mr. Verweij suggested that such information may be displayed through columns indicating height at 10 years, height at 20 years...etc. Elizabeth Rives noted that, alternatively, information on growth rates could be incorporated into the “Notes for Use” column. Nora Palmatier added that information on a tree’s width at maturity is sometimes as important as tree height.

Other comments on the current listing of trees and column headings included the following:

- The list should be presented in a manner that encourages residents to plant native trees (Mikaila Milton).
- The column entitled “Limited Use” should be defined (Dean Amel). This can probably be addressed within the text of the document.
- It would be useful to note whether species are prone to pests and diseases (Janet Nuzum).

- Notes on preferred soil and site conditions would be useful, such as: wet/dry soil, upland/riparian sites...etc. (Scott Brinitzer and Dean Amel).
- Use check marks rather than X's in columns to indicate presence (Elizabeth Rives).
- Remove the column for bark description (Elizabeth Rives).
- Change the column title of "Shade Tree" to "Canopy Tree" (Brooke Alexander). It was then noted that the term "shade tree" may have more meaning to homeowners.
- Include a column for drought tolerance (Steve Campbell).

Mary Ann Lawler asked what sources were used to determine the wildlife value of tree species. Vincent Verweij replied that information was taken from a Chesapeake Bay native plant list and other sources researched by staff members Alonso Abugattas and Greg Zell. Janet Nuzum suggested adding green hawthorn (*Crataegus viridis*) to the list of recommended trees. Vincent Verweij agreed. Elizabeth Rives noted that hickories are generally not available in the nursery trade due to their very large tap root, making them extremely difficult to transplant. She suggested eliminating them from the list. There was considerable discussion of this topic. Caroline Haynes suggested including a note in the "Notes for Use" column, saying that they must be planted when they are very small.

Dean Amel and other commission members thanked Vincent Verweij for developing a comprehensive and systematic list of recommended trees. Scott Brinitzer added that, as the owner of a landscape design company, he finds the list very easy to use and a good source of information to present to homeowners.

Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes from the February 28, 2013, UFC meeting were approved with minor edits.

Staff Reports

Arbor Day

Jamie Bartalon reported that this year's Arbor Day ceremony will be held at Drew Model School, 3500 23rd Street South. The ceremony will be held during the week of April 22. Staff is waiting for confirmation of the exact date from the school's principal.

Notable Tree Awards

Jamie Bartalon reported that Notable Tree Awards will be presented near the beginning of the April 23 recessed meeting of the Arlington County Board (which begins at 3 pm). A total of 19 awards will be presented at this year's ceremony. There are 7 "certificate" winners and 12 "plaque" winners. Three of the plaque-winning trees are located on the same property at 3435 8th Street South (Alcova House). A joint plaque will be presented for those trees, which consist of two white oaks and a black gum.

Washington Boulevard/Arlington Boulevard Tree Impacts from VDOT Projects

Vincent Verweij and Jamie Bartalon reported that staff was not notified by VDOT of plans to stockpile “waste dirt” in the cloverleaf areas at the Washington Boulevard/ Arlington Boulevard interchange, which resulted in the removal of many trees. Brooke Alexander reported that she attended a planning process meeting held by VDOT; however, she felt that VDOT had already finalized their construction plans, and the stockpiling of dirt/tree removal at the interchange was not included in any plan that she saw.

It was noted that VDOT claims that the current project is covered under a 2000 Environmental Impact Study (EIS) that includes tree removal in a nationwide permitting process approved by the Federal Highway Administration. It was noted that permits granted under this category are supposed to be for “small” projects.

Scott Brinitzer noted that the need for coordination with VDOT is a much broader issue than this project alone, and that the ultimate objective should be to institute processes that prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Brooke Alexander reported that VDOT landscape staff member, Ellen Vogel, stated that she will work with the neighborhood and County staff on a plan to plant trees in the interchange’s cloverleaf area. However, Ms. Alexander feels that the neighborhood and the County should be able to tell VDOT what they must do to account for tree loss.

Dean Amel proposed that the UFC write a letter to the County Board, outlining the problem, and strongly urging them to plant additional trees along Washington Boulevard and Arlington Boulevard. The letter may also recommend that VDOT remove the dirt that they have stockpiled in the cloverleaf area. Nora Palmatier agreed to write a first draft of the UFC letter.

It was agreed that the letter should urge VDOT to work more closely with County staff, including work to develop a planting plan. The letter may also reference Arlington County Tree Replacement Guidelines. Brooke Alexander also recommended that VDOT should install more native plants.

Commission Member Reports

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group – The Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) report by Caroline Haynes is attached.

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

Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris submitted information on the Fairlington Neighborhood Conservation Plan presentation to the Planning Commission, including Ed Hiltz's portion on the importance of trees and tree maintenance. Her report is attached.

Public Facilities Review Committee – Ed Hiltz was away and not able to attend the March 13 and March 20 meetings of the Public Facilities Review Committee. The March 13 meeting summary from the Public Facilities Review Committee website is attached.

E2C2 – No report. Alex Sanders was unable to attend the last E2C2 meeting.

Champion Trees Committee – No Report.

Tree Stewards – This year's Tree Steward graduation ceremony will be held on April 24, 7 pm, at Fairlington Community Center.

Tree Canopy Fund – An orientation session for Tree Canopy Fund Grant applicants will be held on April 29, 7 pm, at Fairlington Community Center.

Ballston Pond Stakeholders Committee – No updates.

Boathouse Planning – Mary Ann Lawler's Boathouse Planning update is attached.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee – Elizabeth Rives' NCAC report is attached.

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

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – No report.

Virginia Department of Forestry – No report.

Arlington Public Schools (APS) – No report.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – No report.

New Business

- Dean Amel announced that he attended the County Board budget meeting for commission chairs and advocated for funding for tree and natural resource/invasive plant control programs. Jamie Bartalon noted that County Board members were very interested in the impacts of proposed budget reductions in these program areas at the DPR budget work session.

- Dean Amel reported that approximately 250 people attended the 2nd NVRPA meeting on plans proposed for Potomac Overlook Park. Paul Ferguson, NVRPA Board member, announced at the Potomac Overlook meeting that NVRPA is rescinding their initial plans due to public dissatisfaction with the initial plans and planning process. They will start a new planning process that includes more public involvement at the outset.
- Dean Amel announced that the County is working with a developer on a project in Rosslyn that may result in a major reduction in the amount of open space on the grounds of the old Wilson School. This property currently includes about 3 acres of open space (the largest tract in the Rosslyn area). Open space may be reduced to 1 acre as a result of the development plan.
- Mary Ann Lawler suggested that the commission may want to request a briefing by the Arlington Boathouse Foundation in May. Commission members agreed.

Attachments to March 28, 2013 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group – Caroline Haynes

DPR Planting policies: At the March 4 meeting we heard from Lisa Grandle, Parks Planning Division Chief, and Caroline Temmermand, Parks and Natural Resources Division Chief. Specifically we examined how the two divisions coordinate and what the process is for ensuring that the new DPR planting guidelines are being implemented. NRJAG members are particularly interested in ensuring that appropriate plants are being used in all DPR projects. Currently the process is somewhat informal and it was suggested that a more formal process be adopted to ensure clear communications between the two divisions.

Arlington National Cemetery Millennium expansion project: Representatives from Arlington National Cemetery and the Corps of Engineers conducted a tour and site visit on Saturday, March 16. It was well attended. The revised Environmental Assessment was released on March 12 with comments due on April 12. The proposal has been revised very little from the original EA, and there are still strong objections to the current design on environmental and historical grounds. The draft of the Urban Forestry Commission comment letter on the revised EA was circulated for comment last week. Park and Rec is also working on a draft letter. The proposal will come before the National Capital Planning Commission on Thursday, April 4, 1:00 pm.

Deer Survey: Alonso Abugattas, Natural Resource Manager, reported on the process of surveying deer populations and deer damage in Arlington. This will involve at least a year long study. Neighboring jurisdictions, including Fairfax County, have been examining options to manage the deer population and have begun to implement a deer management plan.

Invitation to attend NRJAG meeting on Monday, April 1, 7:30 pm at Long Branch Nature Center: Jane Rudolph, Director of DPR, is scheduled to attend the meeting on Monday. We will be providing her with a background on NRJAG and an update on the implementation of the Natural Resource Management Plan. UFC members are welcome to join us to get an overview of the implementation to date.

Park and Recreation Commission – Caroline Haynes

Presentation on Febrey-Lothrop site by the Dominion Hills Civic Association: Febrey-Lothrop property is 10 acre parcel of land at intersection of Wilson Blvd. and McKinley Two parcels of the subdivided, but not yet built out, property are up for sale. The Dominion Hills Civic Association is highlighting this as a possible opportunity to land acquisition. It was noted (with a fair amount of bitterness) that since we still do not have a land acquisition policy, it is difficult to determine next steps.

Presentation on Potomac River Boathouse: The boat house group has been working with the County and the National Park Service on two potential sites, one of which would be tucked up under the existing biketrail and the other would be upriver and on private property. They are looking to complete EIS and begin fundraising to support the project. Additional construction

funds will also be sought from the County. (I second Mary Ann's suggestion that it would be good for UFC to receive a briefing.)

Bill Thomas Award: The Commission accepted the committee's recommendations for recipients of the award.

Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris

I don't have a full report this month, but I want everyone to know what an outstanding job Ed Hilz did before the Planning Commission this month. He and others presented Fairlington's Neighborhood Conservation for PC review. It really could be a model for other neighborhood. Fairlington's tree canopy was a significant part of the report because the trees are a part of the community's identity. Ed gave trees the attention they deserve. Ed also explained how County maintenance is so important. It was discussed that perhaps some of the developer money collected for the Tree Fund should be used for maintenance. Excellent point. Fairlington's tree are fortunate to have Ed as a neighbor. I hope to be back in town back end of next week and be able to resume SPRC activities.

Public Facilities Review Committee – Ed Hilz

Due to a meeting conflict and being out of town, I was not able to attend the PFRC meetings on March 13 (Ashlawn expansion) and March 20 (new ES#1 at Williamsburg MS).

The following is a link to a summary of the March 13 meeting regarding the Ashlawn expansion: <http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Commissions/PublicFacilitiesReviewCommittee/file89055.pdf> (Note: March 13, 2013 meeting summary provided below).

A meeting summary of the March 20 meeting is not available at this time.

Public Facilities Review Committee Ashlawn Elementary School Expansion Meeting Summary Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) Update

The project will meet the intent of LEED Silver certification and will include site specific conditions which will address the sustainability/energy efficiency components of the project. It will include components for energy and water efficiency, low emitting materials, energy efficient lighting and daylighting, maximized solar heating and increased ventilation, and permeable paving materials. The environmental analysis is currently under review by the E2C2.

Schematic Design Update

Updates to the schematic design for Ashlawn Elementary School were presented,

including revisions in response to issues identified in the letter to County Board Chairman Tejada dated February 21, 2013. The updates addressed revisions to landscaping, site design, building architecture, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

1) Revisions to landscaping and site design included, among others:

- Reduction in the amount of chain link fencing.
- Opening up the area of the “sledding hill”.
- Relocation of the bike paths adjacent to the front and rear of the building.
- Updates on the stair and ramp connections adjacent to N. Montague Street.
- Modifications to the play areas.

Questions were raised regarding the drainage problems in the play areas and the process for how it will be resolved.

2) Revisions to building architecture included, among others:

- Greater blending of designs for existing and new structure.
- Reduction in the pitch of the addition’s roof.
- Minor additional fenestration in blank wall on the east elevation.
- Different shape windows in media center south elevation.
- No changes were made to the front entrance or canopy.

Questions were raised regarding the need for additional screening and/or relocation of rooftop mechanical structures. The architect agreed to study and respond to this issue at the next meeting in April.

Transportation Recommendation Matrix Follow-up

The revised Transportation Recommendation Matrix was presented, which highlighted 22 required and high priority elements staff will propose for implementation. There were additional questions and discussion on the Wilson Boulevard and 8th Road connection, and improvements to major roads such as Wilson Boulevard which present barriers to children walking and biking to school.

Next Steps

The next PFRC meeting is scheduled for April 17, 2013, from 8:30 – 10:00 pm, at Courthouse Plaza. The discussion will focus on:

- Follow-up to the Transportation Matrix, including timing of transportation improvements.
- Proposed use permit conditions, including improved maintenance of on-site landscaping.
- Discussion of parking options.

The next steps in the process include:

- April 17, 2013 – PFRC meeting: 8:30 – 10:00 pm, at Courthouse Plaza
- May 6, 2013 – Planning Commission meeting
- May 18, 2013 – County Board meeting

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Champion Trees Committee – Dean Amel

There is one more champion tree since our last meeting, a Virginia pine found by Vincent and scored by Greg and Alonso. It is tied for the 5th-largest in the state.

Boathouse Planning – Mary Ann Lawler

The Arlington County Boathouse Foundation made a presentation to the Park and Recreation Commission. The alternative they support would nestle the boat storage facility under the existing pedestrian cyclist bridge that links Rosslyn to the Mt. Vernon Trail and another building on private property up the hill. UFC should ask for a presentation as well.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee – Elizabeth Rives

The NCAC had two agenda items this month: 1) a Stormwater Management Update presentation from the Arlington Christin Jolicoeur of DES and 2) discussion and approval of cost overrun of the N. Daniel St./9th St. N project in Lyon Park.

1. Although stormwater management may be old news to this commission, among others, it was apparently an entirely new subject to the NCAC. Jolicoeur noted that since Arlington's draft stormwater permit is the first of a new, more stringent generation of stormwater permits in Virginia, it's not a question of *if* these practices will take effect, it's a matter of *when*, which seemed to take a few NCAC reps by surprise. The presentation elicited many questions, and much interest, in stormwater mitigation measures that private homeowners can take. Jolicoeur pointed out that many of the watershed retrofit projects could easily piggy-back onto NCAC projects, which would give the NCAC project additional funding and perhaps speed up the timetable on the project. Some reps remarked that it was the best presentation the NCAC had had in years.
2. The NCAC unanimously approved the cost overrun on the Lyon Park project. Like many other NCAC projects, this one was due to factors such as: the need to upgrade the existing drainage system (DES Stormwater fund contributing substantial funds for this); increase in street lighting costs (as has occurred with other projects); increase in engineering costs since project funding; higher roadway reconstruction costs due to design complexity; increases in landscaping, pavement markings, signs, and traffic maintenance (because of work on an arterial roadway); and relocation of an electrical power transformer (costs paid for by Dominion Power).

Columbia Pike Form Based Code Advisory Working Group – Steve Campbell

The Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan (NAP) Form-Based Code Advisory Working Group (FBC AWG) met March 5th. Staff and the consultants presented the first draft of the FBC for the Neighborhoods Area.

AWG's mission is to assure that the zoning code being developed will honor the goals set forth in the Columbia Pike NAP. Trees are one important part of the Plan's design, particularly the streetscapes. Tree-lined streets are still the norm!

Importantly, staff and the consultant teams have included good tree planting/siting specifications into the FBC. The FBC draft specifies adequate soil volume for trees in continuous strips (minimum 6' wide planting strips x 30' tree spacing, whether trees are in continuous tree lawns or contiguous soil panels (with open soil areas alternating with bridged slabs/pervious pavement). Isolated trees are currently given only 110 sq.ft. of soil area. Vincent is working to increase overall volume in these situations through the use of cantilevered or bridged slabs. Vincent's 3/12 email can be found below.

And- Although the Transportation Dept's future bike trail map (attached/ also part of the FBC) does indicate a possible future trail along Washington Blvd, it does not show a possible bike trail in Four Mile Run between Columbia Pike and Geo. Mason Dr. (As the 10/2012 POSAPP draft mentioned in Appendix D, "Trail Connections". Perhaps planning for Col Pike NAP and the Four Mile Run Trail Feasibility Study are on completely separate tracks. Is this a planning change, or just that one plan is oblivious of the other? Something to look into. The FBC draft is attached for those interested. Pages 41-56 are of greatest interest to UFC.