

Urban Forestry Commission
May 23, 2013
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Dean Amel
Larry Finch
Nora Palmatier
Mikaila Milton
Scott Brinitzer
Steve Campbell
Janet Nuzum
Elizabeth Rives
Paul Campanella
Ed Hilz

State and County Staff

Vincent Verweij, DPR
Jamie Bartalon, DPR
Chris Somers, DES
James Meikle, APS
Jim McGlone, VDOF

Guests

Alex Sanders, E2C2
Carole Robinson, Arlington Boathouse
Foundation
Erik Meyers, Arlington Boathouse
Foundation
James Davenport

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Community Energy Plan Update – Chris Somers, DES

Chris Somers (DES) highlighted elements of the proposed Community Energy Plan (CEP), which will be presented to the County Board in June for adoption as an element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. A draft plan was presented to the County Board in November, 2012, followed by a six-month public comment period.

Three major groups of benefits are intended to result from the plan: Economic Competitiveness, Environmental Benefits, and Energy Security/Reliability. The overall goal of the plan is to reduce Arlington's per capita green house gas (GHG) emissions from about 13 metric tons GHG per capita per year, to 3 metric tons by the year 2050.

The plan contains six specific goals:

1. Increase the energy and operational efficiency of all buildings
2. Increase local energy supply and distribution efficiency using "District Energy"
3. Increase locally generated energy supply through the use of renewable energy options
4. Refine and expand transportation infrastructure and operations enhancements
5. Integrate CEP goals into all County activities
6. Advocate and support personal action

In general Arlington's tree canopy goals can compliment goals of the Community Energy Plan in several ways; including:

- Carbon sequestration by trees
- Reducing energy demands by shading buildings; and,
- Reducing urban heat island effects

Although the CEP advocates for the expansion of efforts to utilize solar power, Mr. Somers stressed that the plan supports the concept of "Trees Trump Solar".

Dean Amel and Larry Finch participated in Community Energy Plan task force activities. They noted that a healthy tree canopy helps support goals of the CEP. They were pleased to hear that staff still supports the concept of "Trees Trump Solar".

During a discussion of using wood pellets as a bio-fuel, Jim McGlone noted that energy expended in transporting wood pellets to Arlington needs to be considered when calculating energy benefits.

Nora Palmatier suggested that information on planting the "right tree in the right place" and the concept of "trees trump solar" should be included in educational outreach efforts for the program.

Dean Amel will draft a letter on the CEP for commission review before sending it to the County Board. The letter will note the energy benefits that trees provide, stress that "trees trump solar", and reaffirm that the preservation of tree canopy does not conflict with goals of the CEP.

Update on Arlington Boathouse Proposal – Carole Robinson and Erik Myers, Arlington Boathouse Foundation

Carole Robinson and Erik Myers from the Arlington Boathouse Foundation briefed the commission on the history and most recent recommendations to establish a boathouse along Arlington's waterfront. The initiative to establish a boathouse was originally begun by a crew coach at Washington - Lee High School. All Arlington high school crew teams currently utilize private boat clubs.

Arlington County and the National Park Service (NPS) have been exploring potential locations to establish a boat house since 1992. The County's 2005 Public Spaces Master Plan recommends establishing access to the Potomac River for recreational activities. The NPS recently re-instituted an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) to evaluate potential locations for a boathouse.

Erik Myers reported that efforts of the Arlington Boathouse Foundation have focused on locating a boathouse across the Potomac River from the Georgetown area. He noted that areas downstream of Georgetown are subject to more tidal impacts and the water tends to be choppier than areas near Georgetown. He noted that Arlington County has over eight miles of shoreline (owned by NPS) along the Potomac River, but no direct County access. He added that a

boathouse along the Arlington shoreline would provide new recreational and educational opportunities, and would not just serve high school crew teams.

The Arlington Boathouse Foundation's preferred location for a boathouse is near the Roosevelt Island parking lot, adjacent to the bicycle/pedestrian overpass. The plan for this location includes County acquisition of the privately-owned parcel at 1101 Lee Highway, on the other side of the George Washington Memorial Parkway from the river. The proposed plan places all active functions to support the boathouse (restrooms, lockers, assembly area...etc.) within the 1101 Lee Highway parcel. The boathouse itself would be earth-sheltered and located adjacent to the trail overpass.

Photos from 1994 showed that the area proposed for the boathouse was fairly open when the National Park Service widened the George Washington Memorial Parkway. However, some trees have since become established in the area.

Dean Amel asked when a proposal is expected to be presented to the County Board. Mr. Myers noted that the County has been participating with the National Park Service in the planning process, and a draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is expected to be released by the end of 2013.

Two other sites are also being considered for the boathouse: one near the 14th Street Bridge; the other near Dangerfield Island in Alexandria. However, the location near the Roosevelt Island parking lot is preferred by the Arlington Boathouse Foundation.

Dean Amel asked about parking arrangements for the boathouse at the preferred location. Mr. Myers said that the Roosevelt Island parking lot would not be used, except perhaps for quick off-loading of boats for regattas. No additional parking is proposed, with the possible exception of a few handicapped-accessible spaces.

Elizabeth Rives remarked that the current plan seems to only accommodate organized groups, not private boat owners and residents at large. Mr. Myers stated that single kayaks and canoes would be available for shared community use.

Nora Palmatier expressed concern that photos of the site shown to the commission were taken about 20 years ago, and that a lot of trees have since become established. She also does not agree that the boathouse would provide Arlington with a unique opportunity to access the river, noting that there is river access and opportunities for hikers to have a "river experience" along the Potomac Heritage Trail.

Dean Amel stressed the need to review the EIS in order to understand what is currently located on the proposed site, what is being proposed, and what impacts will result.

Jim Meikle asked how the large trailers and vehicles carrying crew boats would access the dock. Mr. Myers stated that grass "pavers" would probably be installed to provide access.

Larry Finch stated that a previously disturbed site located farther downstream would have been preferred from an environmental perspective. However, safety is a priority. If the boathouse must be located at the Foundation's preferred site in order to help ensure boater safety, the current design concept seems to minimize disturbance.

Scott Brintzer noted that access to the river is also being considered within the Rosslyn Area Planning Study. Alex Sanders added that the National Park Service has also recently become more active in planning for a boathouse on the Washington, D.C. side of the river.

A draft EIS on boathouse options is expected to be released by the end of 2013, with the release of a final EIS anticipated in 2014.

Approval of Minutes

Larry Finch distributed comments on the draft minutes from the April 25, UFC meeting. The minutes were adopted with changes suggested by Mr. Finch.

Staff Reports

- Jamie Bartalon reported that Alan Brady, Jr. has been promoted to serve as the County's new Tree Maintenance Supervisor. Mr. Brady was a very experienced member of the tree maintenance team, and replaces Mr. Tony Ruth, who retired from the County.
- Jamie Bartalon also announced that 11 high school "Senior Experience" volunteers will be assisting the Invasive Plant Control Program, working 30 hours per week, May 28 through June 14.
- Vincent Verweij informed the commission that he was asked to assess the condition of trees surrounding the Faber House, located at the corner of North Quincy Street and 17th Street North. The County plans to sell the property, which was acquired several years ago and will be considered by the County Board for Historic Designation in June. Three trees (a white oak and two black locusts) are in poor condition and will be removed.
- Mr. Verweij also informed the commission that two Tree City USA signs have been installed at entryways to the County. One sign is located on Columbia Pike near Bailey's Crossroads. The other sign is located in Rosslyn, on Wilson Boulevard near North Arlington Ridge Road.

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 – No report. The Park and Recreation Commission will meet on May 29.

Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris’ report on recent planning activities is attached.

Public Facilities Review Committee – Due to a meeting conflict, Ed Hilz was not able to attend the May 1, PFRC meeting regarding the new elementary school on the grounds of Williamsburg Middle School. He provided the following link to a summary of the meeting:

<<http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Commissions/PublicFacilitiesReviewCommittee/file89512.pdf>>.

E2C2 – Alex Sanders reported that the last E2C2 meeting included a presentation on plans for the new Williamsburg Elementary School. A total of 73 trees will be removed due to construction. They will be replaced with approximately 120 trees. The addition is intended to be a “Net Zero” energy project.

Mr. Sanders also reported that the Joint Four Mile Run task Force met about two weeks ago. The Army Corps of Engineers no longer intends to construct a wetland within the corridor area. Instead, the wetland will be located in an adjacent area.

Champion Trees Committee – Dean Amel reported that a pin oak located at the Army Navy County Club has been confirmed as a State Champion.

Tree Stewards – Nora Palmatier’s report on Tree Steward activities is attached.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier’s report on the Tree Canopy Fund is attached.

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

Columbia Pike Form Based Code Advisory Working Group – No report. The Columbia Pike Form Based Code Advisory Working Group did not meet.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Jim McGlone reported that the Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable, “Nuts and Bolts of Urban Forestry”, held today in Arlington was well received and well attended. The roundtable focused on tree roots and the nursery industry. It was apparent that some nurseries monitor the quality of their stock from suppliers much better than others. The program also included a “root washing” demonstration. Casey Trees demonstrated the results of various types of root treatments and root bags for growing and transporting nursery stock.

The Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable may skip their fall quarterly meeting, since they will be holding a conference in November.

Virginia Department of Forestry – Jim McGlone reported that new staffing will result in 5 foresters in the local VDOF office. He also noted that fire blight has been recently found on callery pears. There has been an increase in fungal diseases this year, including sycamore anthracnose, probably caused by the cool, damp, spring weather.

Arlington Public Schools (APS) – Jim Meikle thanked Dean Amel for his participation in this year’s Arbor Day ceremony at Drew Model Elementary School. The program included a lot of student participation.

Mr. Meikle also reported that nine Bradford pear trees will need to be removed at Abingdon Elementary School to provide access for the installation of re-locatable classrooms. Neighborhood concern with the project is high. Mr. Meikle has drafted a letter to notify the neighborhood of activities and impacts associated with the installation of the re-locatable classrooms.

John Chadwick has been appointed as the new Assistant Superintendent for APS. Mr. Chadwick recognizes that there is currently a shortage of APS resources for tree and landscape maintenance. He intends to request additional resources for maintenance of school grounds. This is especially important in order for APS to be able to maintain additional trees and landscaping associated with new school construction and renovation projects.

Mr. Meikle also announced that APS will be expanding McKinley Elementary School, and plans to construct a new elementary school, possibly on the grounds of Kenmore Middle School and Carlin Springs Elementary School.

He also noted that three trees growing on the green roof at Washington-Lee High School will need to be removed.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – No report.

New Business

- Dean Amel reminded commission members that the Beautification Committee is seeking nominations for the 2013 Notable Tree Program. UFC members should contact Dean or Jamie if they would like to nominate trees or help with the program.
- Dean Amel also announced that he has been participating with a ad-hoc group to preserve open space at the old Wilson School site in Rosslyn as talks proceed between APS, Arlington County and a developer to develop the site. The three acres of open space at this location is the largest tract in the Rosslyn area. The group is seeking volunteers to help with the identification and assessment of trees located on the site. Steve Campbell agreed to look at the site. Nora Palmatier will ask (Tree Steward) Don Walsh if he is interested in helping.

- Larry Finch reported that the County Board recently awarded the Bill Thomas “group” Volunteer Award to Friends of Gulf Branch. He noted that UFC member Janet Nuzum was largely responsible for creating the Friends of Gulf Branch group.

Attachments to May 23, 2013 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group – Caroline Haynes

We welcomed the two new UFC members, Janet Nuzum and Paul Campanella. The May meeting focused on the role of the Nature Centers in promoting recommendation #19 of the NRMP (environmental education). Cliff Fairweather (Long Branch Nature Center) and Jen Soles (Gulf Branch Nature Center) provided members with an overview of the wide array of programming offered by the staff of the nature centers. NRJAG members and staff exchanged ideas on how we might reach a broader cross section of the population. There was concern raised about the change in the demographics of the participants of the programs now that almost all of the programs have a fee to participate and a concern that the education provided may be reaching a much less diverse population than previously. There was discussion that perhaps the programming provided by the nature centers is more similar to that provided by libraries (more education focused) rather than purely recreation and that the current fee structure may be undermining the efforts to educate citizens on environmental issues.

We also talked about the ongoing update of the County's website and how we might make natural resource information more available to the public. (It was noted that the tree information currently on the website is excellent and should be replicated for other natural resources topics.)

Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris

Projects Approved by County Board -

Pierce Queen Apartments – SP #425, (need staff confirmation on CB approval)

- Located between 16th Street and Rt. 50 in the Fort Myer North Planning Area
- Approved 12 story, 193 unit apartment with 25% Affordable Housing units.
- Approved plans achieve the master plan urban tree recommendations. preserving 2 mature Willow Oaks at either end of the 2 existing garden apartments, wide tree planting strips (6 ft in width) and a garden apartment character for the public realm.
- Streetscape is significantly improved by the proposed street trees, few street trees are existing. Plan calls for 12 Ginkgo's along Pierce and Queen, 6 Pin Oaks along 16th Street, and 6 Chinese Elms along mid-block pathway.
- The significant historic preservation of 2 existing garden apartments along 16th Street maintains the garden character of the community.

Ashlawn Elementary School Expansion – Use Permit U-1217-56-1 (need staff confirmation on CB approval)

- Expansion of Ashlawn Elementary School – 26,160 SF, 3 story addition with new on site parking and access drive from N. Manchester Street.
- Significant traffic congestion and unsafe conditions along 8th Street for existing pick-up and drop-off and bus parking.
- Major controversy over loss of open space for on-site parking and drop-off and pick-up.

- Significant tree loss but Arlington Public Schools will replant 127 new trees in accordance with County requirements.

Frabor House – Request to Advertise Historic District (will return to PC in July)

- Located a 1612 N. Quincy Street, adjacent to Oak Grove Park, Cherrydale
- Proposed as a historic district for preservation of the residence and garage, Park Department owns 3 lots including the historic residence and garage, plans are to sell the lot with the historic house to create a new entrance to Grove Park on the other two lots.
- Issue: should the free standing garage within the woods on a separate lot adjacent to the historic house lot be included in the historic district.
- Staff supports the inclusion of the garage in the historic district but recommends relocating it to the lot with the historic residence or elsewhere in Cherrydale.
- Tree concerns: if the garage is relocated, how does the relocation affect the surrounding trees? Does the Park’s new entrance plans impact existing trees?

On-going Site Plan Review Committee Activity

Colony House – SP #423, Will be heard by County Board in July (pulled from May Agenda to include signage in the proposal).

- Located along Lee Hwy at old Colony Furniture site.
- Approved an 8 story hotel, 168 units with bonus density.
- Approved a row of street trees along Lee Hwy. (7-Swamp Oaks), along N. Quinn (6-London Plane) and preserved ex. wooded hillside on the south adjacent to the Rosslyn Heights apartment building.
- Requested but did not achieve street trees beyond the property due to VDOT and applicant’s concern to not provide maintenance beyond their property.

Metropolitan Park 4 & 5 – SP Amendment # 105, Scheduled for PC in July, 2013

- Located in Pentagon City, along S. Eads Street and 12th Street extended.
- Development by Vernado and Kettler Brothers.
- 699 residential units, and Whole Foods grocery store, a use sorely needed in the area, especially residents of Crystal City.
- Construction of 12th Street with space for the planned transit stop in the middle of the new street.
- Street trees on all street frontages, but street trees need to start closer to the intersections, CPHD staff agree and will try to achieve this.
- 32 foot building setback along S. Eads due to underground utility creates a significant opportunity to create a linear urban space along the frontage along the entire Metropolitan development (several blocks fronting S. Eads).
- Applicant agrees to coordinate designs of all three blocks, significant tree planting opportunities.

Shreve Apartments – SP #427, scheduled for PC September, 2013

- Located in East Falls Church, west of I-66, developer is Silverwood Company.
- 228 residential unit, small street level retail uses

- Major circulation and access issues. Limited street frontage due to two property owners not willing to assemble with developer.
- Limited street tree opportunities or open space.

Penn Place – PDSP and SP #105 Amendment, scheduled for PC July, 2013 (not likely)

- 12 ac site located south of Army Navy Drive, Pentagon City, Vernado Developer
- Discussion has focused on land use mix (secure buildings, how many and inclusion of residential or not), open space (major town green), building heights and density.
- Significant opportunities for urban forest improvements.
- Multi use, phased development of approx. 6 blocks with 5 bldgs and 1 ac. open space. Streets and, open space and mix of uses are all being discussed by SPRC. May include a secure building site with significant bldg. setbacks (82') from curb. Offers significant tree planting opportunity but less urban and activating. Very controversial. General UFC Comments for Design Guidelines are:
- Start street tree layout at approximately 30 feet back from the corner intersection (out of clear zone sight lines) in order to increase shade and maximize tree canopy.
- Pull back underground garage from tree pit alignments. This is especially a concern along the private streets.
- Increase soil volume provided to each tree. Strive to achieve up to 650 to 1,000 cubic feet of amended soil per tree.

Latitude Apartments – SP #426, scheduled for PC July, 2013

- Located at NE corner of Fairfax Drive and Monroe Street, Virginia Square.
- Proposed 12 story residential building, 256 units with ground floor retail and plaza.
- Master Plan calls for office uses not residential. Much SPRC discussion over the proposed use and whether or not there is proper balance between jobs and housing within the planning area.
- Street trees are proposed on all 4 block frontages. Standard concerns that the trees do not start close enough to the street corners. Developer has increased tree canopy in response to comments.
- 10th Street street trees are also developed as storm water infiltration areas.
- Next step, Planning Commission in July.

Rosslyn Plaza – PDSP, SP #422, Scheduled for PC September, 2013

- Located between Kent Street and Arlington Ridge Road
- Proposed mixed use development, 1.8 million SF offices, 300-360 residential units, 1 hotel, and significant urban open space.
- Under SPRC review. Very controversial due to lack of street grid, nature of urban open space
- Proposed urban tree plans along all street frontages and within open spaces over structure. Significant amount of tree plantings with over 1,000 CF of soil for trees.
- Plans are evolving with each SPRC in response to SPRC comments.

New Site Plan Applications (Soon to be scheduled for SPRC)

4318 N. Carlin Springs Road – SP #

- 104 Residential Units, developer is APAH
- Significant street frontage and street tree opportunities.

1000 N. Glebe Rd (Blue Goose Building) – SP#64 Amendment

- Potential application. No SPRC schedule yet.
- Significant street frontage and street tree opportunities

1401 Wilson Boulevard – SP Amendment #7, & #21

- Located in downtown Rosslyn, between Key and Wilson. developer is Monday Properties
- Proposal includes a grocery store, 274 residential units and 573,600 SF office

2401 Wilson Boulevard – SP #404

- Former Kitty O’Shea Pub Site, Courthouse Square, developer is Schupp Company
- Proposal includes 161 hotel and ground level retail

New Site Plan Applications (On Hold)

10th Street Flats – Use Permit 3348-12-1, On Hold

- Located at 3132 10th Street in Clarendon, developer is Clark Realty.
- 72 residential units with street level retail.

Key Boulevard Apartments – SP Amendment #181

- Located at 1545 Key Boulevard, Rosslyn, On Hold.
- 159 residential units including 84 affordable units. Developer is AHC, Inc.

American Service Center – SP Amendment #72

- 585 N. Glebe Road , On Hold

Long Range Planning Activities

Rosslyn Station Area Addendum – Realize Rosslyn

- Update of the Sector Plan
- **Next opportunity for community input is yet to be announced. Consultants and planners are reviewing community input from March meetings.**
- Key planning issues:

Creating an enhanced **urban design framework**

Refining, improving **transportation options**

Recommending a **building heights strategy**

Developing a **more cohesive, functional parks and open space network**

- **UFC members need to attend and promote urban forestry goals of 17% canopy coverage or more.** Crystal City has 17% canopy coverage. Need to advocate for wide

sidewalks(wider than 15 feet as called for in the Transportation Study) and greater soil volume than current County Standard because there's no break out space for the roots to find.

Tree Steward Activities – Nora Palmatier

Tree Stewards are busy with the summer tables at Courthouse & Westover in Arlington and Del Ray in Alexandria. Several TS are working pruning to repair Dominion butchers under the power lines & removing invasives on the Ornamental Tree Garden along W&OD in Bon Air Park. We hear funds are approved to label all these specimen trees – which includes natives as well as the exotic. Patrick Wegeng and Lois Barb have arranged a system of weekly work orders to keep all coordinated.

Tree Benefit Sign Projects – Trees Virginia is providing each TS chapter several large tree tags to attach to trees that will tell how much it saves in stormwater and energy \$. We expect to get ours soon and will have to decide strategic locations so they are seen by many. One definitely near our County building but where? If successful we may enlarge the project.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier

The April 29 Tree Canopy Fund meeting had more TS helpers than applicants present - same as last year so I suggest the program isn't needed by returning applicants, or coming to an event is too difficult. 8 groups have a TS assigned and 4 more are coordinated by TS. Elenor reports that 31 groups have registered so far and 2 individuals. How to best serve individuals was discussed between us and we'd like to explore a way of combining ideas from the Tree Distribution using TCF funds. TS have received a lot of emails on our info@TreeStewards.org asking when the next tree give away is and what they species will be this fall so there is interest. Providing smaller trees to homeowners who come to pick them up (and receive education then) is definitely more cost effective than paying a contractor. Is it also more beneficial increasing canopy? I suggest a subset of UFC come up with proposals to incorporate this somehow next year.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee – Elizabeth Rives

The NCAC's last meeting was a purely social one to celebrate the career of Department Chief of the Neighborhood Services Division, Chris Nixon, who will be retiring from Arlington County this coming June. I did not attend the reception.

May 15th was the deadline for neighborhoods to submit their first priority project for the Fall 2013 funding round. There will be a Points Committee meeting on Thursday, May 30th at 7pm, County office building, Birch conference room, on the lobby level. Neighborhoods that have a project within funding range (50 points & above) should be present at both the Points meeting and funding round.