

**Urban Forestry Commission
November 19, 2015
Meeting Summary**

Attendance

Dean Amel
Nora Palmatier
Steve Campbell
Paul Campanella
Karen Kumm Morris
Caroline Haynes
Mikaila Milton
Ed Hilz
Phil Klingelhofer
Elisha Rubin
Per Midboe
Taylor Pool

State and County Staff

Jamie Bartalon, DPR
Rachel Jackson, DPR
Lida Aljabar, DPR

Commission members welcomed Taylor Pool, appointed to the Urban Forestry Commission by the County Board on November 17, 2015.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Rosslyn Highlands Park+ Draft Concept plan – Lida Aljabar, DPR

Lida Aljabar, DPR, presented a draft concept plan for Rosslyn Highlands Park and surrounding open spaces. The County Board directed staff to conduct an open space planning process following the Board's July adoption of the Western Rosslyn Area Planning Study (WRAPS). Three public meetings/workshops were conducted in October and November, leading to staff's proposed concept plan. The plan is now in the concept refinement stage. An open house to discuss the proposed plan is scheduled for December 3.

Staff's planning process for Rosslyn Highlands Park and surrounding open space included a site analysis, a review of park amenities in the surrounding area, and an analysis of potential park user demographics in the Rosslyn area. The site analysis included sun/shade studies and park user circulation patterns. Existing locations for active and passive recreation, and their proximity to the site were also analyzed. The closest opportunity for active recreation is located in Fort Myers Heights Park, which is approximately a 17 minute walk from Rosslyn Highlands Park.

A large percentage (40.9%) of the population in the Rosslyn area is 25 to 34 years of age. A survey of current park users indicated a general appreciation and need for a large open space area; however, there was a range of needs and preferences for different types of open space and amenities among park users.

Park design challenges for this location include: limited site area; challenging sunlight/shade conditions; expectation of below grade parking facilities; and, community demand for a wide variety of park amenities.

Input received during public meetings shows that tree canopy is very highly valued. Other amenities valued by the community include: a multi-use court, play areas for two age groups, an open field, basketball courts, and passive open space.

As a result of a sun/shade study, the orientation of the multi-use court has been shifted. Although pockets of shade exist with the current layout, opportunities exist for some planting on terraced areas. A vegetated screen along the playing field is also envisioned.

The target for tree canopy coverage on the portions of the site that include Rosslyn Highlands Park and surrounding open spaces is 20%. The plan also calls for building up the topography to increase soil volume for trees, prioritizing the planting of native species, and ensuring high quality soil.

Next steps in the planning process include addressing phasing and interim conditions, developing cost estimates, and finalizing design guidelines. A concept plan is expected to be presented to the County Board in January 2016.

Steve Campbell remarked that, given design challenges, the current draft concept plan strikes a good balance between the need for tree canopy and the community's desire for active recreation amenities. Caroline Haynes agreed that, given site constraints, the proposed plan meets a wide range of community desires. Karen Kumm Morris suggested that the UFC may want to comment on the need for adequate soil volume when planting trees above underground parking, and the importance of providing high quality soil.

Ed Hilz asked whether the public will have access to the site's underground parking. Ms. Aljabar informed the commission that public access to parking is being discussed with Penzance (the developer of the privately owned portion of the site). Steve Campbell added that the community will also have access to the APS basketball court and other APS amenities after school hours and on weekends.

Karen Kumm Morris agreed to work with Steve Campbell on drafting and circulating a UFC comment letter for commission member review in December.

PSMP Input – Recommendations for Updates to the Urban Forest Master Plan

Dean Amel, member of the Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) Advisory Committee, reported that the committee was informed that an update to the Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP) is not included as part of the planning process for the PSMP update. Jamie Bartalon explained that DPR cannot support conducting two simultaneous planning processes. Since the UFMP is a component of the PSMP, the planning process to update the UFMP will not kick off until the PSMP update is complete. However, the UFC can provide input through the PSMP planning process (through the PSMP Advisory Committee) on topics to update or add to the UFMP. Direction for UFMP updates may then be included as recommendations within the PSMP.

Ed Hilz asked what the projected timeline is for completion of the PSMP. Caroline Haynes explained that a statistically valid survey of County residents will be coming out soon, and it is currently estimated that the PSMP will be completed in about 18 months. She added that the UFC can also provide input on outreach efforts for the PSMP planning process.

Copies of a 2013 memo to staff from Larry Finch and Greg Zell, providing suggestions for UFMP revisions/updates, were provided to commission members. Dean Amel informed UFC members that they may provide him with input for updates now or send him written suggestions.

Nora Palmatier suggested that the management and preservation of small, County-owned parcels of wooded land that are not considered to be “official” parks should be addressed in the PSMP and/or UFMP. An example of such a parcel is the wooded area near South Walter Reed Drive and South Four Mile Run Drive, where Phoenix Bikes originally proposed to build a new facility. Commission members also agreed that recommended soil volumes for tree plantings should be addressed in the UFMP.

Ed Hilz asked whether staff are required to implement recommendations in County Board approved master plans, and whether progress is tracked by senior leadership. Commission members and staff discussed the topic. Jamie Bartalon noted that an implementation plan, outlining agency responsibilities, priorities and anticipated timelines, is often included as part of a master plan. In the case of the Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP), County leadership and the Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) monitor implementation of the plan’s recommendations. It was also noted that implementation of master plan recommendations can vary, depending on the nature of the recommendation, resource requirements/availability, complicating factors, and unforeseen circumstances.

Dean Amel asked commission members and staff to review the 2013 memo of suggested updates to the UFMP (noted above) and send him their input and additional recommendations.

Discussion of Draft UFC Letter on APS Landscaping

Commission members discussed Dean Amel’s draft letter on APS maintenance of trees and natural areas, which focused primarily on the potential transfer of some parcels of land between APS and Arlington County. Previous comments from Caroline Haynes and Nora Palmatier were incorporated into the draft version of the letter that was discussed. In general, the letter

recommends that proposed transfers of County parkland for APS use should be balanced with the potential transfer of APS wooded property to County ownership/stewardship.

The letter contends that APS does not have the necessary financial or technical resources to manage forested/natural areas, and that such areas could be more effectively managed by Arlington County. Such land swaps would also help to ensure that there is no net loss of parkland.

Ed Hilz remarked that the subject line and opening sentences of the draft letter refer to landscaping and the lack of APS resources for landscape maintenance. He questioned the letter's initial focus on landscaping, when the overall intent seems to be the potential transfer of properties between APS and Arlington County, which could result in County acquisition of forested land in exchange for APS use of some portions of park property. Nora Palmatier also questioned the reference to landscaping in the draft letter.

Dean Amel asked commission members whether the letter should focus more on potential land transfers between APS and Arlington County in order to better maintain tree canopy. Ed Hilz noted that the main message seems to be that there needs to be a better mechanism for managing forested/natural lands on APS property.

Dean Amel asked commission members to send him their suggestions for changes to the draft letter. He will then circulate a revised draft that emphasizes the need for better maintenance of trees and natural areas, as well as introduces the concept of potential transfers of land between APS and Arlington County.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the October 22, 2015 UFC meeting were approved with edits suggested earlier by Caroline Haynes and circulated among UFC members.

Staff Reports

Jamie Bartalon provided the following updates:

- The Acting County Manager has invited commission chairs to a Fiscal Year 2017 budget meeting on December 3, at 6:30 pm. An additional member of each commission may also attend to provide input on their commission's priorities for the FY 2017 budget.
- The January 28, 2016 UFC meeting will include the review and determination of Notable Tree Awards. John Wingard (Tree Steward) will present photographs, measurements and his recommendations for 26 Notable Tree nominations.

Rachel Jackson provided the following updates:

- Nominations have been received for designating five trees as “Specimen Trees” through the County’s Tree Preservation Ordinance. The County Attorney’s Office is currently reviewing property ownership documentation in order to ensure that all owners listed on deeds concur with the designation of trees.
- Rachel Jackson and Vincent Verweij recently attended the “Trees Matter” symposium. Michael Dirr was a featured speaker and presented information on some species that have not been widely used, including some hardy cultivars that may work well as street trees. Some species/cultivars may be added to Arlington County’s list of recommended trees.
- A planting plan is expected soon for the Virginia Highlands Park renovation. All trees have been planted for the project at Gunston Park. Ed Hilz asked whether protective devices are installed around newly planted trees, especially near play areas. Staff responded that protective devices have not been installed in the past, but their potential use can be further discussed.
- Ms. Jackson reported that she has been involved in tree preservation/removal discussions associated with the deconstruction of two houses on recently acquired County property. One house is located adjacent to Benjamin Banneker Park. The other house is adjacent to the South Lang Street Community Garden.

Vincent Verweij was not in attendance, but submitted the following updates:

Conferences:

I attended both the Trees Matter Symposium and the Soils conference through our urban forest roundtable, last week.

From the Trees Matter symposium, I got some great new ideas of species to plant in Arlington, from Michael Dirr and Holly Shimizu. I’ll be adding some of these to our recommended tree list, and I’ll circulate that again. We also learned about tree decay and soil quality, which tied into the next conference.

The soils conference was great. Thanks again Nora, for organizing this. It went very smoothly, it seemed, once it got going. I got some great ideas for projects that might be feasible in Arlington County, and am currently writing an article on soil space expansion in urban areas, which I will share with the group, as well.

Schools:

Ashlawn is wrapping up with tree planting. Still some to go, but it’s close to finishing. Abingdon is still under design.

Discovery school is close to finishing. I’ve been working with their team to get the trees planted.

McKinley is getting closer to finishing up, too, though we're not close to planting trees, yet.

Stratford school is still being planned, so no updates there.

Wilson/Rosslyn Highlands is being planned. See Steve Campbell's update

VDOT/Dominion meeting:

I met with concerned residents from Penrose and Alcova Heights, as well as VDOT and Dominion staff in a meeting expressing concerns about tree damage and lack of concern about tree canopy on transportation projects. I was mostly a mediator, but staff from VDOT, expressed support for changes to improve the communication and the assessment of impact of their projects. Dominion staff will continue to work to improve their pruning practices, and even offered to prune trees outside of migratory bird breeding season. It was a heated discussion at times, but I think we all left with good points to work from.

I provided some suggestions on creating "reforestation zones" on VDOT property, which would prevent mowing, and let our forest regrow naturally. This will of course bring with it some of the less-desirable species, but with minimal management, we can get some of our canopy back. I will be working with Ellen Vogel, the landscape architect from VDOT on this, as a potential option with tight budgets.

Parks:

Tyrol Hills is one I headed in Rachel's absence. It's under construction. Significant tree protection and fencing was put in place. Minimal tree impact was a goal on this project, and they're doing well at this.

The Bike training loop at Four Mile Run and Columbia Pike is finished. I haven't walked the site yet, but this is open now.

Site plans:

Karen will most likely update on this. I'm still working on issues with site plans not showing enough tree canopy on site (outside of street trees). This will hopefully resolve, but it's still a little bit of a struggle.

Form-based code projects with parks and trees:

Some projects are coming in around Columbia Pike.

Columbia Hills is an affordable housing project at Frederick Street. There is an RPA, and some tree impact. Trees will be replaced, and the site will get significant planting. We are also asking for long-term invasive plant control.

1201 S Smyth St. This street doesn't exist yet, but this is a project along the Army Navy Country Club, as part of the Wellington Apartments, along S Scott St. Significant tree impact may be part of this. An RPA is on the property, and I will work with the developer to reduce the impact on this stream, as well as maximize canopy. There will be a park as part of this, too, so this may be presented later in the process.

Commission Member Reports

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

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

Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris’ Planning Activities report is attached. Ms. Kumm Morris also urged the UFC to submit a letter recommending that “horticultural soil” should be provided for tree plantings associated with the Rosslyn Plaza PDSP. Currently, conditions for the PDSP specify the use of “structural soils” for tree plantings associated with the development of this area. Dean Amel asked Ms. Kumm Morris to draft a letter for UFC discussion at December meeting.

Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) – No report. The PFRC did not meet.

Rosslyn Highlands Park+ - In addition to the presentation and discussions on Rosslyn Highlands Park+ earlier in the agenda, Steve Campbell’s report is attached.

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) – Alex Sander’s E2C2 report is attached.

Tree Stewards – Nora Palmatier’s Tree Stewards report is attached.

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

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Nora Palmatier’s Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable report is attached.

Tree Distribution Program – Nora Palmatier’s report on Arlington’s Tree Distribution Program is attached.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – Phil Klingelhofer’s NCAC report is attached.

Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) – No report.

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) – No report.

Arlington Public Schools (APS) – Jim Meikle’s APS report is attached.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – No report.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Attachments to November 19, 2015 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Committee (NRJAG) – Caroline Haynes

Sarah Archer, Arlington County Landscape Specialist and Invasives Coordinator, reported on the joint project with NOVA Parks (formerly Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority) on the treatment of invasive species along the W&OD trail. Sarah is hoping to expand the partnership and include Dominion Power and neighboring jurisdictions to develop a Coordinated Weed Management Area to better address invasive species within Arlington County.

Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) – Caroline Haynes

- Jennifer Fioretti presented on new DPR donation policy.
- Presentation by H.K. Park on the guide and rankings that he and his children published on Arlington's parks.
- Irena Lazic provided an update on the PSMP including questionnaire, scope, timeline and outreach.
- PRC discussed issues related to the Williamsburg field lighting task force. PRC agreed to send a letter opposing the road through the Stratford School addition (letter attached).

Planning Activities – Karen Kumm Morris

Planning Initiatives

- Community Facilities Study –Nora Palmatier has been providing comments and tracking the Task Force meetings. Final report submitted to County Board and School Board on November 10, 2015. Both Boards voted to approve the recommendations. Going forward the County staff will provide their preliminary comments by Feb. 2016. Final staff recommendations and community comments expected by September 2016.
- Western Rosslyn Area Planning Study (WRAPS) - Steve Campbell has been covering this study. Highland Park plan under review.
- Lee Highway Corridor – Lee Highway Design was a big success in terms of citizen engagement, over 200 people attended throughout the weekend. Nora Palmatier and Caroline Haynes both attended. A boulevard of trees was envisioned in almost everyone's comments. Next steps: the consultants are writing a draft report that should be released in December for community comment and delivered to the County Board for comment in January. Lee Highway's Citizen Advisory Group advocates for a Task Force to develop a new master plan based on the charrette recommendations.

- Columbia Pike and Crystal City Reassessment – No new information. Could staff please provide more updated info?
- PSMP – Public Spaces Master Plan underway. Dean has no new update. Major opportunity to address all open spaces natural areas as well as recreation parks and urban plazas.

SPRC Site Plans (Approved)

4301 Wilson Boulevard, SP#193, Ballston Quarter –

Approved by County Board, Nov. 17, 2015. This is the partial redevelopment of the Ballston Commons Mall. The project will demolish the existing Macy’s Furniture Store, and the existing Mall, and renovate the office building over Macy’s Department Store. The County’s parking garage, and the corner office building, The Point located at Wilson and Glebe, are not part of the redevelopment scheme. The plan proposes to construct 406 residential units at the corner of Randolph and Wilson (Macy’s Furniture building), open up the face of the mall to Wilson Boulevard with an open courtyard toward Wilson, relocate the Metro pedestrian bridge and retain the existing cinemas. The ice skating rink over the garage will also remain.

The plan will upgrade Wilson and Glebe Road with new sidewalks, lighting, street trees and street furnishings. The eastern end of Randolph will be upgraded to the same level but not the western end of the block.

SPRC Site Plans (active)

750 N. Glebe Road, SP#440, Ballston – A 12 story, brick residential development at the corner of Wilson and Glebe that steps down to 4/5 stories on the existing community side of the block. Currently developed with the Rosenthal Mazda Dealership and surface parking and Enterprise Rent-a-Car.

There are many issues related to building mass, street network, loss of existing service alley and open space raised by the community. Proposed tree planting plans are good, but additional canopy is possible at the corner of Vermont and Tazewell Street.

Opportunity to request increased soil volume and horticultural soils (not structural soils) for the street trees. Need to have UFC to request that all street trees be replaced and planted with a min. of 1,000 cf, of sandy loam (not structural soil). If the tree pits are to be used as SWM bioretention ponds, UFC should request that an alternative design be used to avoid restricting the species to only wet tolerant trees that can handle stormwater collection in the sunken tree pit.

Rosslyn Plaza, PDSP, SP#422, Rosslyn – Ongoing SPRC discussion of Vernado’s proposed multi-building and multi-phased complex on the east end of Rosslyn. Proposal calls for 1.8 million SF of office, 600- 700 residential units, and 83,500 SF of retail. Significant town square/open space is proposed along Kent Street connecting to the existing Freedom Park and

Rosslyn's city center. Very controversial open space location, but new Sector Plan allows for alternative locations. All trees and urban open spaces are over structured garages.

Major tree issue: The PDSP establishes design guidelines approved by County Board. The design guidelines propose planting all trees in structural soils, (75 – 80% gravel based soils). Soil research by Bartlett Tree Research Lab shows that trees are healthier and more vigorous with horticultural soils that have more micro-organisms, oxygen, and nutrients than a gravel based, structural soil. Some experts claim that trees “stall out” over time planted in structural soils.

The UFC and County Staff need to require better soil for this 3 block area. This project is a significant one providing a major open space recreational experience for Rosslyn. The proposed trees need to perform well over a long period and not “stall out” due to poor soils.

UFC needs to send a letter to PC and CB requesting that the design guidelines be modified to not specify structural soils for this 3 block area.

1411 Key Boulevard, SP #439. Washington Vista – The 62 unit housing proposal is located just west of the Turnberry Tower in Rosslyn, considered part of Colonial Terrace community. Applicant is requesting an amendment to the GLUP to allow for a greater density project than currently allowed (base density would allow 42 units). Good layout and quantity of street trees. CB approved the request to advertise for GLUP Amendment in Oct, 2015. Estimated CB Site Plan hearing in Nov. or December.

1770 Crystal Drive, SP #90, Crystal Square – Will be scheduled before the County Board in December. This is a minor site plan amendment to the building's interior and façade. No significant changes are occurring to the setting. There are no street trees currently along Crystal Drive, and no space to provide for them given that the building's supporting columns are only 7 feet from the face of curb.

SP #46 4000 and 4040 Fairfax Drive (Web Building), Eric Gutshall
Developer – John Kusturiss, Penzance, CFO AV, Tad Lunger, attorney, Jason Ovalle with Hickok Cole Architects, Barbara Coulston with Parker Rodriguez.
330 units, 8,400 SF retail, in ex. Web Building 173,500 SF office, 11,700 SF retail.
Street tree plan follows RB streetscape guidelines, but the Plan should be revised to start the first tree on N. Randolph closer to N. Fairfax Drive, matching the tree layout shown for N. Quincy Street unless utilities are a constraint.

UFC should request up to approx. 1,000 cubic feet per tree be achieved. If SWM is being proposed within the tree pit, UFC requests that the tree pits not be sunk below the sidewalk elevation. DES, DHCP and Natural Resources should work together to develop an alternative SWM for urban sidewalks. In addition to SWM green roofs, please consider providing edible gardens for residents use. Very popular and desired by many residents.

Rosslyn Highlands Park + - Steve Campbell

For those would like a preview of the "Rosslyn Highlands Park +" presentation we will have Thursday, the last of three community meetings was held November 9th. A single concept was presented at the meeting. You can access the presentation slides by going to the following:

<http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/new-rosslyn-highlands-park/>

During the meetings, public support was greatest for "tree canopy" and "adjacent playgrounds" (see slide #34).

One concern (not really part of RHP+) is the noticeable lack of street trees indicated along most of 18th Street between Quinn and the "New" Street (slides #52 and 70). APS would like to maximize the playing field's width, and 18th Street is where the school buses will line up. However, there must be street trees, even if they are planted 'inside' the sidewalk to not conflict with the buses and student loading/unloading. If the only option is to plant trees on school property and the field has to be narrower, so be it.

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) – Alex Sanders

- E2C2 discussed and finalized a letter favoring the Zero Waste Resolution.
- E2C2 finalized a letter opposing the road through the Stratford School addition.
- E2C2 discussed issues related to the Williamsburg field lighting task force.
- No meeting in October.

Tree Stewards – Nora Palmatier

Winter Tree ID program was presented by Vincent to TS. His presentation is at

<https://treestewards.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/winter-tree-id-vverweij.pdf>

I've requested 3 dates from APS for workdays January – March, pruning at their choice of schools. Next class starts Feb. 2.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier

ACE working with Davey Trees to set timeline for planting in Nov. & Dec. Technical Adviser to review planting stock and planting procedures is still open.

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Nora Palmatier

Soils Conference held Nov. 5 at Algonquin Regional Park. From UFC, Karen Kumm, Steve Campbell and myself attended (and 6 Arlington staff) Arlington's soil amendment project along the medians was given as a good model by presenter Dr. Susan Day and UFC should follow up on where else this could be used, and future results as the trees grow.

Arlington Tree Distribution Program– Nora Palmatier

Arlington’s Tree Distribution Program was a really successful day with lots of education provided! It really does work well. Distributed over 400 trees but at least 50 of these were to “walk ins” at the end of the time period for those who didn’t pick up their trees. I’m estimating that 100 out of 450 people were no shows. We should discuss how deposits can be used to minimize this.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – Phil Klingelhofer

On November 12, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) held its monthly meeting, with the following action items:

Discussion / Action Items

- I-66 Multimodal Proposal – Dennis Leach, Director of Transportation, Department of Environmental Services (DES): Mr. Lynch gave a PowerPoint presentation on the latest version of VDOT’s proposal for I-66. The County Manager’s report to the Board can be found [here](#). If I get a copy of the PowerPoint, I will forward it to everyone.
- Jason Hardin, Capital Bikeshare Planner, Consultant to Arlington County Commuter Services (ACCS): Mr. Hardin gave a PowerPoint presentation (attached) on Capital Bikeshare with details on usage growth and future expansion plans.
- Arlington Parks and Demographics by Civic Association
Spreadsheets showing the distribution of park playgrounds and number of children served in each civic association were distributed. See attached.
- NC Project delays due to Dominion Virginia Power lack of responsiveness and coordination: Staff reported that two NC Projects have been considerably delayed due to the inability of Dominion Power to follow through on relocating an underground line and two utility poles. The NCAC approved sending the attached draft letter (with some small revisions) to the utility CEO. Despite monthly meetings with Arlington County staff, coordination of this type of work with the utility company continues to be a serious problem.

Also attached are the NCAC September 10 meeting minutes. (There was no October NCAC meeting).

Arlington Public Schools – Jim Meikle

Over meetings the last 2 nights we informed County and Community of the impacts of our interim (relocatable village) solutions at grossly overcrowded Williamsburg and Swanson. The latter has only minor impact as the vast majority will be on existing blacktop as we anticipate leasing a church parking lot immediately opposite the school. The former will have some relocatables on the grass field though we are working hard to keep that to a necessary minimum. As always we will take all storm water mitigation measures called for under our MS4 permit.