

**Urban Forestry Commission
November 17, 2016
Meeting Summary**

Attendance

Nora Palmatier
Steve Campbell
Paul Campanella
Phil Klingelhofer
Ed Hilz
David Howell (PRC)

Absent

Scott Brinitzer
Per (David) Midboe
Alex Sanders (E2C2)
Caroline Haynes
Dean Amel
Mikaila Milton
Elisha Sigmon Rubin

County and State Staff

Brian Keightley, DPR
Vincent Verweij, DPR
Debbie Albert, CPHD

Guests

Sarah McKinley – Columbia Heights

Public Comment

Sarah McKinley of the Columbia Heights neighborhood deferred her public comments to the agenda item for the request for new park land acquisition at 1200 S. Cleveland Street.

S3-A Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Debbie Albert, Senior Planner with the Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development presented the following information:

- Proposed amendments only apply to schools and would allow modification of height and setbacks and the use of off-site parking.
- Prompted by recent APS applications for Wilson, Stratford and Thomas Jefferson schools
- S-3A is a zoning district intended to encourage retention of undeveloped land and is the primary zoning district used for public uses
- Article 4, §4.2. S-3A, Special District would be modified as follows:
 - §4.2.3 Part D – the text dealing with density exemptions would be eliminated.
 - §4.2.4 Part A – new language would be added to describe and modify required parking spaces, allow off-site parking to be used, and modify density and dimensional standards for the use permits for elementary, middle, and high schools.
 - Notable changes relevant to UFC:
 - Greater vertical development to allow balance for opportunities to provide open space and recreational amenities within the school development project.
 - The modification of required parking spaces and/or off-site parking to be allowed.
- Article 14, §14.3.3 Part B – would be modified to incorporate text allowing off-site parking for S-3A District
- Article 14, §14.3.3 Part C (a) – would be modified slightly to allow school sites to use off-site parking locations if the school development project incorporates design that would “reduce impervious surfaces, minimize grading, preserve existing trees, or similar techniques”

The following topics were discussed:

- Setbacks and minimizing setback.
- Will this amendment result in a net loss of trees?
 - Group discussion concluded no net loss of trees would result.
- Intent of the amendment was really for urban school sites, TJ and Wilson could not be developed without setback changes.
- What about other public facilities in S3-A?
 - ZOCO may reevaluate other types of public facilities and building in the future.
- Vertical development of school would generally be better for trees and open space.
- The amendments would give board discretion based on site conditions of school project.

Action Taken:

Nora Palmatier will draft a letter in support of the amendments, especially as they pertain to the preservation of trees and the allowance for modifications to the parking requirements.

Updates on Ordinance Adjustments for Tree Preservation

- Nora Palmatier reported that Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE) would be holding a work session on the topic with concerned citizens on Dec 8th, from noon – 1:30pm at the Fairlington Community Center.

No Action Taken

Should UFC have Priority Criteria set for land acquisition?

The group discussed the following criteria:

- Land that has a forest community, a complete ecosystem that provides natural habitat.
- Land that protects/buffers a forest community.
- Land with tree canopy that provide the entire benefits of trees to all residents - cleaner air, beauty, reduced stormwater, cooling.
- Land for passive enjoyment of trees that will remain passive rather than turned into tennis court for example.
- Land that increases tree canopy for the local neighborhood.
- The issue of geographic fairness - i.e. underserved areas.
- Importance of ensuring land purchased is monitored, i.e. with house removals have seen tree damages which negates purpose.
- Arlington POPS process should be addressing some of these issues.

No Action Taken. A letter to the board on the prioritization of forested and treed land acquisition in the future.

Current request for new park land acquisition -1200 S. Cleveland

Phil Klingelhofer introduced Sarah McKinley, Chair of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee for the Columbia Heights neighborhood, who gave a short presentation about the need for new park land acquisition at 1200 S. Cleveland.

Talking points made by Ms. McKinley included:

- Large Willow Oak in the front yard that would be eligible as notable tree.
- Additionally, a very large Japanese maple is on the property.
- Older house with significant architectural importance to the neighborhood.
- Owner has plans to develop the property and cut all of trees down in the process.
- Owner is open to the possibility of selling the property to the county to be used as a park.
- Half-mile from the nearest park..
- Other adjacent property owners are interested in selling their property if 1200 S. Cleveland is redeveloped.

UFC discussed the following points:

- Is land acquisition for parks really in the UFC's scope of concerns?
 - Concerns really more in the scope of Park and Recreation Commission (PRC)
 - Lisa Grandle's Park Planning group would handle internally in Department of Parks and Recreation
- UFC would feel comfortable writing letter with their priorities for land acquisition, but does not feel in this case that it would be appropriate to write a letter in support or opposition to the land acquisition.

No Action Taken.

Approval of October Minutes

July minutes approved. Paul Campanella motioned, Steve Campbell seconded.

Staff Reports

Vincent Verweij provided the following updates in an email prior to the meeting:

- iTree: I've presented my data to DPR staff. A presentation to UFC can be ready for the new year. I will be out for the December meeting.
- NRPA: We met with the National Recreation and Parks Association's Natural Resources section. They wanted to know about our great programs. We took them on a tour of Gulf Branch and Fort CF Smith, to show them our conservation practices, education programs, and other work.
- Schools:
 - Wilson school is in intense planning. The street trees along 18th are probably moving back to behind the curb now. Trying hard to fit all the replacement trees on site.
 - Stratford is also ongoing, and I am integrating comments from the UFC from last time. I hope to remediate the loss of the forest as much as possible.

- Columbia Pike multimodal project: This project was presented to you, a couple of months ago. More sections of the Pike are now under planning, and we will have to start looking into where to plant replacement trees in this corridor
- Four Mile Run Stream restoration: tree removal is underway, and tree protection is installed. It's going to look pretty bare for a while, but hopefully the replanting will help.
- Arlington Forest Civic Association: I presented to the AFCA Wednesday the 16th with Alonso. The presentations were well-received, and I got very thoughtful questions from the crowd of about 50.
- Planning: I'm working on a project in Crystal City called Landbay D, which includes a new park, connecting to the existing park (with the eyes). No impact will be done to existing trees, as there are none, and the park poses an opportunity for additional canopy in this area.

Brian Keightley provided the following updates in an email prior to the meeting:

- Tree crew busy with emergency pruning and removals. Tree crew working with qualified staff when removal or pruning is in question to minimize unnecessary take downs or damage to trees.
- Fall tree planting under way with Davey, 361 trees scheduled for installation.
- Urban Forester Position – hoping to have it filled by end of November.
- Notable Trees for FY17 –Have several applications sitting on my desk to send John Wingard.
- No progress on DPR side for revisions to the Tree Canopy Fund. This will likely be a several month process before it goes to the board for approval.

Projects

- Washington Gas – between N Fillmore and Pershing on Arlington Blvd, several trees being impacted by the installation of a 16” gas main. Entire project within VDOT right-of-way and Arlington has no jurisdiction to enforce tree preservation standards.

Park Projects

Planning and Design Phase

- Oakland Park – unveiling of draft design plans - Nov. 28 at 7 p.m. at the Ballston Virginia Square Civic Association meeting- The Jefferson, 900 N. Taylor Street.
- McCoy Park – 2nd Open House for presentation of concept was held 12/14/16.
- Benjamin Banneker Park – demo of the two houses on the recently acquired property to begin shortly.

Under Construction

- Chestnut Hills Park – adding two parcels to the existing park. Working with construction manager and contractor to mitigate the situation.
- Woodlawn Park –Completion of construction expected by 12/23/16.
- Bluemont Field #3 Renovations and Trail Connections – tree preservation for field looks good.
- Highview – under construction. Tree preservation looks good.
- Tuckahoe Park - Finished

- Quincy Park – Playground Renovations. Finished. Ribbon Cutting, Nov 19, 1 p.m.

Tree Removals

- Green Tree (removal contractor) will be conducting removals at Bluemont Park closer to the Carlin Spring parking lot and the hillside leading up towards Route 50 from November 28th - 30th, but it may run into the first couple days of December.

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 – No update this month.

Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) – No update this month.

Rosslyn Highlands Park – No update this month.

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) – No update this month.

Thomas Jefferson Working Group – No update this month.

Tree Stewards – Nora Palmatier’s Tree Steward Report is attached.

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

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

Ordinance Review – Nora’s Ordinance Review report attached.

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

Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) – Dean Amel’s report is attached

Four Mile Run Valley Working Group – Caroline Haynes’ Four Mile Run Valley report is attached.

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) – Jim McGlone’s VDOF report is attached.

Arlington Public Schools (APS) – No update this month.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – Kirsten Buhls' VCE report attached

New Business

Recognition of Jamie Bartalon's retirement.

- Brian Keightley will send out information in regards to any celebration.

Next Meeting: December 15, 2016

Attachments to November, 2016 Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Summary:

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group (NRJAG) – Caroline Haynes

Alonso Abugattas, Natural Resource Manager, walked the members through progress on the 19 strategic directions in the Natural Resources Management Plan in preparation for the annual report to the board. NRJAG will be drafting a summary report for review at the December meeting.

Representatives from the American Bird Conservancy will be presenting at the December 5 meeting (7:30 pm at Long Branch Nature Center) on bird strikes with buildings and steps that can be taken in building design to minimize bird deaths.

Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) – Caroline Haynes

We heard the zoning presentation that UFC will hear tonight. There were lots of questions about how this change may have un-intended negative impacts on parks and open space in the long run. There was particular concern about the ambiguity of the language allowing for the impacts of one development to be offset elsewhere. We also heard a presentation on the number, nature and use of all of the outdoor recreational fields in Arlington.

Closeout Budget: The County Board adopted the closeout budget plan at their November 9 meeting. No funding was allocated for land acquisition for parks, as has been done in previous years, and as was requested by PRC.

Planning Activities – (vacant)

No update this month

Wilson School PFRC report – Steve Campbell

No update this month

Stratford School PFRC report – Ed Hilz

No update this month

Rosslyn Highlands Park – Steve Campbell

No update this month

E2C2 – Alex Sanders

No update this month.

Thomas Jefferson Working Group – Vincent Verweij

No update this month.

Tree Stewards – Nora Palmatier

ACE has been reviewing grant applications and is setting a date for reviewing.

Tree Canopy Fund and Tree Distribution Program – Nora Palmatier

Need UFC members to attend application review meeting Nov. 30, Wednesday, 6:30 PM at 2700 Taylor St. Please plan on coming. ACE still recruiting Contractor for planting

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Nora Palmatier

Thursday, Dec. 8, NoVa Community College Loudoun Campus. Topic is how to work with Home Owner Associations. Brian Keightley is on a panel from his work as a Consulting Arborist. Registrations at www.TreesVirginia.org

Tree Ordinance Review – Nora Palmatier

Steve Campbell, Nora Palmatier, David Howell met with Vincent Verweij, Brian Keightley to compare the Code of Virginia 15.2-961. Replacement of Trees during development process (1997) and 15.2-961.1 Conservation of trees during land development (2008). Although most of Arlington County's regulations are enabled through the 1997 legislation within the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance, they did use 2008 version to enable the Tree Canopy Fund. The 1997 legislation may offer more flexibility establishing credits for tree conservation and bonding. Staff will draw up a Pros/Cons for UFC to consider before any request is made to County Attorney. (I have a 3 page comparison with links to all regulations if anyone wants detail)

ACE Arlington Natural Resource Working Group will meet on Thursday, Dec 1 from noon - 1 pm at Fairlington. These are residents concerned with tree preservation and with making the county a Biophilic City. They are looking at building coalitions with developers, other groups for conservation. Both Steve Campbell and I are trying to attend.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – Phil Klingelhofer

On October 13, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) held its monthly meeting, with one item on the agenda:

- **Staff report on NCAC project status** - Tim McIntosh reported that the NCAC webpage has an up-to-date status report of all approved NC projects: [Active Projects Status Update September](#).
- **Update on Streetlight Management Plan** – Larry Marcus, Bureau Chief, Transportation, Engineering and Operations Bureau provided an update on the new program to evaluate the county street lights in commercial and residential areas to 1)

catch up on maintenance of existing lights and 2) guide the long-term planning to upgrade and modernize the street lighting system. There are approximately 20,000 street lights in the County, of which approximately 1/3 are owned and controlled by the County, with the remainder owned by Dominion Power. Approximately 80% of the County lights have been converted to LED lights. Staff anticipates that all lights will be repaired to working order within a year. Staff is conducting a comprehensive GIS mapping of all lights to understand the wide range of different systems, styles, and reliability. The new lighting plan will consider 1) sustainability, 2) technological capabilities, 3) quality of light (color), 4) maintainability, and 5) cost effectiveness.

Proposed NC Process Changes Presentation – Paul Bolejack, NC Representative, Waverly Hills led a discussion on the process changes proposed by the working group. Goals:

- Adhere to the NC Way. Keep our policies and procedures consistent with the stated objective of the NCAC.
- The *Public Right of Way* is for Public Benefit. Neighbors should work together as part of a collaborative process for determining appropriate uses.
- Unique Impacts on Residents in Close Proximity. While the question of appropriate uses of public ROW is a matter for all those who use it, the question of how the project is accomplished can often be shaped for the better through the involvement of the residents who live closest to it.

We discussed the proposed changes but no action was taken. See here for additional information: [Proposed Process Changes](#)

- **Parkland to protect trees.** After the meeting, I was approached again by Sarah McKinley, NCAC Chair and Columbia Heights Civic Association representative regarding any possible assistance with her community's efforts to convince Arlington County to purchase two adjoining parcels of land with a number of very large mature trees for parkland to protect and preserve the trees. On October 13, NCAC discussed urging County to acquire land for freestanding park and contiguous to parkland whenever opportunities become available. The intent is to urge county to buy these two properties now, which are slated to otherwise be developed, to protect three huge trees at risk due to development of lots. UFC support is desired, but it is unclear how we can help. (See attached letter for additional information.)

Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) – Dean Amel

The most recent POPS meeting on updating the Public Spaces Master Plan began to tackle the core strategic direction of the plan: Public spaces. I've attached just the main points from the discussion on Nov. 9. The notations after each point give the corresponding section of the existing PSMP. Either I or Caroline can provide people with the details underlying these main points.

Strategic Direction 1: Public Spaces

Ensure equitable access to high quality public space experiences by acquiring new land and improving existing spaces.

- 1.1. Target the addition of new public spaces in underserved locations and the addition of key parcels to existing parks. (2005:1.2.1.)
- 1.2. Maximize the utility of existing public spaces. (incorporates 2005:1.2.)
- 1.3. Use a context-sensitive, activity-based approach to providing amenities. (replaces 2005:1.2.4., 2005:1.2.7., 2005:1.5., 2005:1.5.1., 2005:1.6.1.)
- 1.4. Provide amenities that maximize the appeal of public spaces. (incorporates 2005-1.9.)
- 1.5. Ensure high-quality visual and physical access to the Potomac River, Four Mile Run, and their tributaries. (incorporates 2005-1.8.)
- 1.6. Strive for a more attractive and sustainable public space system.
- 1.7. Strive for universal access. (incorporates 2005-3.1.)
- 1.8. Enhance spaces with temporary uses and “pop-up” programming.
- 1.9. Review and implement changes to the County’s zoning regulations to facilitate implementation of this plan.
- 1.10. Incorporate the recommendations of the Public Spaces Master Plan into future sector, corridor, and other County plans.

Four Mile Run Valley - Caroline Haynes

The Working Group continues to receive existing conditions reports on a range of issues, which has prompted push back from some members of the working group who are frustrated with the lack of collaboration to date with the process. Staff have emphasized the importance of bringing everyone up to speed on the range of issues involved, though this may be redundant for those who have been focused on these issues for many years.

Virginia Department of Forestry – Jim McGlone

Approximately 1 ton of acorns and other tree seeds were collected in Arlington county and sent to the DOF’s Augusta Forestry Center to grow new trees for next year. Over 1600 pounds were collected by a single individual. The rest were collected at Arlington National Cemetery by volunteers working the Potomac Conservancy.

Jim also provided the Wildfire Report for 11/17/16 to provide a better understanding of some of the other services the VDOF provides the Commonwealth. The active wildfires were in Washington, Russell, and Buchanan counties in far southwest Virginia.

Arlington Public Schools - Jim Meikle

No update this month.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – Kirsten Buhls

December 15th we graduated a new class of Master Gardener volunteers who are already at work on their certification process and special projects. Master Naturalist training continues for a few more weeks.

I thought you might be interested in the following:

For 2016 to date I and my help desk program here in the Fairlington office have had 672 contacts related to tree questions. Tree ID, Tree care, arborist referral requests, Tree disease and insect pests, and pruning. This does not count the question received at the MG plant clinic that in the past have totaled variously about 245 questions on tree related topics alone. Many calls are asking what to do about a potentially dangerous tree. Tree leaf and trunk diseases, tree death, and insect pests make up the bulk of the questions. I believe that there is great interest

People love their trees.

Tree walk programs conducted at Fairlington this month drew a small group of people but on a neighborhood by neighborhood, basis, there is great desire for visits by knowledgeable tree experts to advise on health, maintenance, pruning, and site specific selection for new plantings. I have visited 3 sites in past 6 months. Great demand already for pruning workshops in late winter/early spring.

Major upcoming events of interest include planning for the state Urban Agriculture Summit that will be held in Arlington in October 2017