

Urban Forestry Commission
February 23, 2017
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Nora Palmatier, Chair
Per Midboe
Caroline Haynes
Paul Campanella
David Howell
Steve Campbell
Phil Klingelhofer
Elisha Ruben
Scott Brinitzer

State and County Staff

Brian Keightley, DPR
Adam Lipera, DPR
Vincent Verweij, DPR
Steven Bernheisel, APS

Guests

John Wingard
Adam Segal-Moss
Bill Roos
Mary Glass
Bill Browning
Eric Masonic

Public Comment

Mary Glass informed the UFC of concerns about the Donaldson Run Tributary B project, and its associated tree loss. Ms. Glass left information on the value of the trees impacted.

Douglas Park resident Adam Segel-Moss informed the UFC about impact on a site at Fort Barnard Park, where trees were removed as part of site maintenance. Mr. Segel-Moss raised questions to UFC about the site being used an industrial work site, temp use permit, jail industries removing trees, the number of trees removed, JFAC process, zoning, and communication/language barriers. A request was made to UFC to review the landscape plan.

Notable Trees – John Wingard

The notable tree nominations were presented for the UFC. The following trees were approved:

317 Thomas St: Southern Red Oak: Plaque
416 S Wayne St: Southern Red Oak: Plaque
3557 N Abingdon St: Southern Red oak: Certificate
6223 Lee Highway: Scarlet Oak: Certificate
409 N Thomas St: Pin Oak: Plaque
2608 N Harrison St: Pignut Hickory: Certificate
5524 4th St S: American Elm: Certificate
313 S Cleveland st: European Linden (noted as American Linden): Plaque
5701 18th Rd N: Cedar of Lebanon: Plaque
1301 N Evergreen St: American Persimmon: Plaque

The following trees were not found to meet the criteria for notable tree status, and the applicants will be sent letters, to be drafted by staff, and coordinated with the UFC: Nora Palmatier offered to help with the letter.

5201 15th St N: Pignut Hickory
700 S Adams st: Southern Magnolia
2634 S Lynn St: Atlas Cedar
6204 28th St N: American Beech

Minutes

December minutes were approved unanimously
January minutes were approved unanimously

2017 Work plan

The plan was approved with a correction to the date. This will be uploaded to the website

New Members

4 applications for new UFC members are in. Nora will be reviewing these with Jay Fisette

Updated Tree Canopy Study and FY 2018 Budget

Vincent Verweij reported on current research, and the cost of an urban tree canopy study for Arlington County.

Brian Keightley noted it would be beneficial to have this information before the Urban Forest Masterplan update.

A discussion followed on what the priorities for budget requests should be.

A motion was passed to write a letter to the board to recommend a one-time canopy study, and to increase the maintenance budget. A section will be included to thank the board for the money for trees from the stormwater budget, the effort of volunteers, and the continued funding of the invasive plant management project.

Staff Reports

Brian Keightley:

- Tree crew is continuing to see an uptick in emergency pruning and removals due to recent high winds.
- Lois Barb is planning for Spring planting. Aside from street trees, there will be a focus on park planting.
- No progress on DPR side for revisions to the Tree Canopy Fund. Hoping to make progress on this soon. Brian has taken some of the training required to submit board reports and hopes solidify proposed amendments to review with UFC in February.
- Vincent Verweij has accepted the acting assignment as Urban Forest Manager

Park Projects

Planning and Design Phase

- Nauck Town Square - no update
- Oakland Park – staff currently commented on 30% designs. Urban Forestry staff focused on helping large elm through construction process.
- McCoy Park – no update
- Fairlington Community Center – staff is reviewed 60% plans and made recommendations for tree preservation.
- Benjamin Banneker Park – Adam Lipera and Brian Keightley did a site visit. Urban Forestry's preference for any new amenity development is to be away from the Resource Protection Area (RPA).

Under Construction

- Tyrol Hills – construction of new park amenities going for bid. A large number of smaller, mostly ornamental trees will be removed, but most larger oak trees will be preserved during construction.
- Chestnut Hills Park – adding two parcels to the existing park. Demolition phase is complete. Phase II is under planning
- Woodlawn Park –open to public March 1, official opening ceremony TBD.
- Bluemont Field #3 Renovations and Trail Connections – no update
- Highview Park – under construction.

Large or Significant Tree Removals

- Due to high winds, probably two dozen trees have come down in parks, private properties, and right-of-way, but nothing noteworthy or prominent.

Vincent Verweij:

Permitting:

- February usually brings a slower trickle of plans, but this year has not been slowing down. Staff is fully scheduled with plan review, while also addressing other issues.

Tree removals and planting:

- Removals: Some minor removal work has been done around the county. The wind storm did bring some trees down, and knocked out some power lines, but it wasn't extreme.
- Planting: Some planting is already underway. We are having some issues finding certain species, and are working with Davey Trees on this.
- Dominion Power: Transmission line clearing and removals are almost complete, along the large transmission lines in the county. You will see pruning cuts, and a handful of removals. They were all coordinated with UF staff, where removals were requested. Some snags were left, and in natural areas, logs were left behind, where appropriate.
- Ash trees: I would be surprised if any ash are alive this year, except for the ones treated by us. Looking at the blanding and bark damage driving through the county, we are going to see significant removal costs from this.

Site plans:

- Pentagon Centre: These projects are finishing up design. The residential tower, Grant St Extension, and mall are underway. The demolition for the residential tower already occurred. They are using a running tally for tree canopy, but are exceeding replacement and canopy on site.
- 750 N Glebe (old Mazda site): This is finalizing review. Some shuffling of tree pits happened along Glebe Rd, but the project has significant planting throughout the plan. Still has to address some comments from design.
- Ames center: A proposal came in for this Rosslyn site. One of the first sites to come in after the adoption of the Rosslyn Sector Plan. This project will be required to provide a 60 ft Greenway/pedestrian path through the middle, between Fort Myer Dr, and N Nash St. Options are being explored on how this will be designed.
- Best Western Motel along Rt. 50: This has a proposed site plan in. We are exploring park benefits, but the design already looks good, with significant canopy proposed.

Schools:

- Everything was included in Steve's report on Wilson. Not much on the other projects, surprisingly.

DES:

- Many projects are in design, but nothing major is moving right now. Stream restorations will become a bigger topic later in the year.

Presentations:

- Presented to a high school class at Washington-Lee on urban forestry and i-Tree. There was good interest, and got an offer from one student for volunteer time.
- Roundtable: Presented today on working with Civil Engineering Plans and utilities, to prevent impacts to trees and utilities, by moving utilities in design.
- NRJAG: Presented on i-Tree Eco. Great attendance.
- ARMN: I'll be presenting the Forest Ecology and Dendrology class, previously taught by Jim McGlone, for the class this year.

Commission Member Reports

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group – Caroline Haynes' Natural Resources Joint Vincent Verweij presented on the i-Tree Eco project

Park and Recreation Commission – No report. Did not meet

Planning Activities – Vincent Verweij noted projects in Staff Report. Steve reported in some, and Elizabeth Gearin may report from the Planning Commission.

Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) – No report.

Rosslyn Highlands Park+ (WRAP) – Steve Campbell

Update on the Wilson School Use Permit, 1555 Wilson Boulevard, Queens Court and Rosslyn Highlands Park.

Earlier this month the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) sent the County Board (CB) comments on the Wilson School Use Permit. Last week's two Planning Commission (PC) meetings on the four WRAP implementation area development projects included discussion of issues UFC addressed in its previous letter. The PC meetings also covered issues regarding the other WRAP projects. These discussions are outlined below, one property at a time. I am preparing a UFC follow-up letter to send the CB.

The big picture- going into WRAPS there was a goal of 20% tree canopy cover over the entire site (at 20 years). It is questionable that this goal is attainable. The large Penzance, and APAH building 'footprints' relative to the size of the property (and with little rooftop/setback planting to compensate), as well as the expansive artificial turf playfield and the new street all take up a lot of space, to the exclusion of space for more trees. More and more the only space around new development is the sidewalk and driveway.

How much canopy cover will the trees in the WRAP area provide 20 years after all the construction dust settles? Will canopy cover exceed 15%? Will it reach the 20% canopy goal planned for the WRAP area? Probably not likely.

Some street trees in WRAP will be planted too closely to buildings. The need to maximize density in WRAP has buildings rising vertically at the 'build-to' line up to a high level. The trunks of street trees will be planted as close as nine feet from these facades. Although these trees will count as 'full canopy' in calculations, in reality their canopy will be limited by the lack of space around them.

Recent design changes to Rosslyn Highlands Park are concerning. UFC approved the 'final' design last year. Although these new details have not been reviewed by UFC, it appears the main part of the park now has reduced planting area. The pedestrian pathway area is dramatically changed- once designed as a naturalized area with decent tree canopy, it now appears to have much wider walkways; the narrow, triangular form of the planting beds would make it difficult to find much space to plant trees. A parking garage elevator was added which significantly limits planting space.

I suggest UFC withhold recommending approval of the Rosslyn Highlands Park Use Permit (as have the Planning Commission (PC) and Parks and Rec Commission (PRC)).

As the planning stages of WRAP wind down, there is good new due efforts by APS and APAH to maximize tree canopy on their sites (to the extent possible). Penzance has also been receptive to adjustments in its design.

Wilson School Use Permit (SP #U-3468-16-1)

UFC is very pleased with progress made by Arlington Public Schools (APS) staff and their design team. A number of issues raised in our letter of February 8 are being addressed, and will contribute to the success of APS's exciting concept plans (themes of using Nature as a backdrop to learning, and planting species representative of the four physiographic regions of Virginia on four of the school's terraces):

- The local civic associations and UFC have both requested that APS meet its tree replacement requirements by planting all trees on the Wilson site, and maximizing tree canopy is a goal of WRAP. *As of last week, APS had moved significantly closer to meeting its tree replacement requirements by finding planting locations for about 70 of 79 trees at the Wilson site.*

-APS and its design team stated it will provide *adequate soil volume* for the trees, and that *plantings will be anchored to avoid being uprooted by strong winds*. Roofs will be designed to adequately support the weight of the increased soil volume. As long as the roof can withstand additional soil volume, planting somewhat *larger ("medium" size) tree species* will be considered. *This would provide a shadier, more comfortable rooftop environment, as well as help APS get closer to meeting their tree canopy requirement on-site.*

-APS discussed the *maintenance plan for the rooftop plantings*. Recognizing a rooftop environment increases trees' exposure to harsh conditions, an irrigation system will be installed, and maintenance contracts for the plantings are planned for the foreseeable future.

-UFC strongly supports the following *Planning Commission motions* adopted last Wednesday regarding this project: PC voted to require (1) APS to meet all of its tree replacement on the Wilson School site, and (2) that APS have a 'permanent' maintenance plan for the rooftop plantings so as to assure their health and viability.

-There was some discussion of a wind study, but such studies are not currently required as part of the County site plan process. There was a comment that with the continued urbanization of downtown areas, requiring a wind study for some projects would make sense, be appropriate, and useful.

Penzance, 1555 Wilson Boulevard (SP #445)

Thanks to the Penzance team for being responsive on a number of issues raised by UFC at the PC hearings. Except for the first item, several positive developments follow below:

-There is a significant tree replacement requirement of 46 trees for the entire site (the West and East Buildings). *These buildings have large footprints so, once again, meeting tree replacement on site will be a challenge.* The landscape plan on file indicates plantings on rooftops and setbacks, which appears to include approx. 22 small trees or upright shrubs. This would be less than half the replacement requirement. Their landscape plan for these areas appears more decorative than actually significant in terms of tree canopy.

-Penzance offered an *alternative site for the APS parking garage elevator*, placing it inside the West Building. UFC supports this option since it would potentially increase the area for tree planting and significantly reduce hardscape.

-UFC comments at the hearings included mention that *West Building balconies overhanging the pedestrian pathway will further reduce light levels for trees in an already mostly shady area, and create an impression of a 'closed in' space.*

The balconies were shown to start at only 24ft above grade, and are up to 6ft wide. The space between the school and West Building is only 50ft wide.

Penzance agreed to remove six lower balconies and reduce the size of two more. Taking out the lower balconies opens up the pathway area and also will increase light levels, including afternoon light reflected off the building façade.

At the end of the meeting PC passed a motion requesting removal of additional balconies and attempt to further alter the massing of the building.

-UFC requested a *second street tree along Wilson Boulevard* south of the West Building, which is being looked at by County staff. A traffic signal needs to also be installed at the corner, but it seems there will be room for both the tree and traffic signal.

-*Penzance also agreed to take measures to protect trees from uric acid damage*, either by application of repellent or designing tree pits in a way that would impede dog access. Newly

planted trees are more susceptible to damage from dog urine, and there will be a large increase in the area's population, as dogs will be permitted in both buildings.

Rosslyn Highlands Park (SP #445-U-16-1)

-UFC objects to potentially significant changes in the design of the park. It appears there have been *significant increases in hardscape, both in the pedestrian pathway area and the main park area.*

-The community and UFC advocated for years for adequate tree canopy and passive areas which complement active park amenities, particularly in the main park area. On hot sunny days, the afternoon sun will beat down on this park. The typical breeze that has come from the south on summer afternoons will be blocked in future years by the West Building. *Tree canopy/ groves of trees are important to the success of this park. Considering the sun exposure there, an irrigation system should be considered.*

- This park will be heavily used. The population of North Rosslyn CA will almost double as the result of WRAP. *Dogs will be walked in the park.* Every square inch will be trod upon by park visitors, causing *soil compaction.*

-UFC objects to the idea of re-zoning of the park from S-3A to C-O. UFC recently reviewed the benefits of S-3A and find it to be much more protective of trees and tree canopy.

-The PC voted unanimously to defer approval of the park's use permit to allow further review. It also urged Penzance to explore additional building form changes to reduce massing of the West Building, which would further open up the pedestrian path area.

Queens Court (SP #444)

The owner, Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH), and their landscape design team have come up with a very good landscape plan and been very responsive to UFC concerns.

-They are working with CPHD and Traffic staff to accommodate a *UFC request to add one street tree on Key Boulevard* at the corner of Quinn, although there is also need to site a traffic signal at the corner. There appears to be space for both. APAH has otherwise maximized the planting of street trees around their property.

-APAH is maximizing tree canopy on grade at the only place they can, at their entry's courtyard. *They do not plan to have rooftop or setback areas planted with trees. They may fall slightly short of meeting their tree canopy requirements on-site.* They do have other properties nearby.

Overall, I would suggest UFC recommends County Board approval of three components of WRAP: the Wilson School, the APAH site, and the Penzance buildings. I also suggest UFC make its approval of the plan for Rosslyn Highlands Park contingent upon satisfactory review and revisions in the design.

Related project websites for additional information:

Wilson School

<https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commissions/public-facilities-review-committee-pfrc/school-projects/wilson/>

1555 Wilson (Penzance) <https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/projects/1555-wilson/>

Queens Court <https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/projects/queens-court/>

Four Mile Run Valley Visioning – Nora Palmatier

Group is still looking at large picture, with many different groups wanting many different benefits. All say they want more green space and trees. Details at <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/plans-studies/four-mile-run-valley/>

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) – No report.

Thomas Jefferson Elementary School – No report

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier. No report

Tree Stewards: - Steve Campbell

Thirty have signed up for the new Tree Steward class, the largest number to date! The first class is this evening, 7PM at Fairlington Center. Graduation is May 9th. Consider attending- there are some great teachers.

Update- The Tree Steward group headed up by Hugh and Marilyn Robinson continues its good work. About one year ago, working with County Parks and APS staff, they began performing maintenance on County trees at parks and schools, or along streets, pruning out dead branches and doing some structural pruning. They are also removing invasive plants growing up the trees. County tree crews are mostly busy taking care of emergency pruning and tree removals. They usually do not have time/ adequate staff to perform the type of routine maintenance Hugh and his volunteers are doing.

Eight volunteers finished up work at Patrick Henry Elementary School and the adjacent park, library and career center this past Saturday, with great assistance and support from Steven Bernheisel of APS. The group's parks contact is Patrick Wegeng.

Ordinance adjustments for Tree Preservation – Nora Palmatier

No report. To discuss at March meeting

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) – Phil reported on NCAC

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

Discussion / Action Items

- *NCAC project cost overruns* - Tim McIntosh reported that several projects that are moving into the construction phase have experienced significant cost overruns. While each project is different, the main reasons for the higher costs include new regulatory requirements, higher contractor costs, and higher materials costs. The cost overrun report for each project is attached. The NCC voted to recommend to the County Board that these overruns be approved. The additional funds required for these projects would come from the current NC bond funding cycle. You can review an up-to-date status report of all approved NC projects: [Active Projects Status Update September](#).

Informational Items

- *Update on Streetlight Management Plan* - Frieda Kulish, Maywood NC Rep and Streetlight Management Plan Advisory Panel Member provided us with the attached summary of the panel's first two meetings. For information on the Streetlight Management Plan (SMP), see the attached document.

Public Spaces Masterplan – Nora Palmatier

No report

Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable – Happened the same day. Presentations were performed on reducing impacts to trees and utilities by better design and practice.

Virginia Department of Forestry – No report.

Arlington Public Schools (APS) – Steven Bernheisel

Arbor Day to be celebrated on April 27th, at Nottingham Elementary school. Scott Brinitzer has been assisting APS on improving Wakefield landscaping.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – No report.

New Business

A motion was passed to start meetings at 7:00 PM, and passed, with one member objecting.

Next Meeting: March 23, 2017 – Courthouse Plaza – Room 311