

Urban Forestry Commission
September 28, 2017
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Nora Palmatier, Chair
John Carey
Patricia Norland
Caroline Haynes
Ed Hilz
Scott Brinitzer
Steve Campbell
Brian Keene
Evelio Rubiella
Sherry Frear
Phil Klingelhofer
Kimberly Fedinatz

State and County Staff

Brian Keightley, DPR Liaison
Vincent Verweij, DPR
Joel Franklin, CPHD
David Cristeal, CPHD
Bethany Heim, DPR
Sarah Archer, DPR

Guests

None

Public Comment

No public comment.

Communications between meetings with staff, public, commissioners – Nora Palmatier and Brian Keightley, DPR

Nora Palmatier reminded commission members about protocols for public meetings requirements and that Open Meeting requirements must be met when 3 or more Commission members get together, which includes emails. She also reminded members present that all meetings and correspondence conducted on behalf of the commission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Brian Keightley reminded members to review the information found the [2014 Arlington County Advisory Group Handbook](#) and stated that he would send a copy to all members after the meeting via email.

Accessory dwellings – Joel Franklin, Associate Planner CPHD

Joel Franklin of CPHD gave his PowerPoint presentation on revisions to the Accessory Dwelling Ordinance. Staff and a working group have been examining possible adjustments to existing accessory dwelling unit regulations to advance the goals of the Affordable Housing Master Plan (AHMP). The AHMP identified accessory dwellings as an existing tool to help meet the goals of having an adequate supply of housing to meet community needs and of supporting older adults aging in place. The Plan recommended review of the regulations to encourage greater use.

- Adjustments are proposed for Detached Accessory dwellings.
- Proposed regulations are consistent with detached accessory buildings (e.g. garage).
- Would allow detached accessory buildings to be used for homestay (i.e. Air BnB).
- Remove limit of 28 accessory dwelling approvals per year.

- Change affidavit of compliance at initial occupancy.
- Require deed covenant.
- Changes to the design requirements (i.e. door placement, street visibility).
- Changes to homeowner occupancy requirements.
- Changes to lot area and width requirements and building setbacks.

Staff also proposes that tree preservation materials be included in application packet given to residents considering accessory dwellings.

Urban forestry commission members discussed impacts to trees:

- Proposed changes may affect neighbors' trees, as they would allow detached dwellings to be within 1 foot of the property line in some cases.
- Would there be any tree replacement requirement if limit of disturbance less than 2,500 sq.ft.?
 - No tree requirements if Land Disturbance Permit not required.
- Are these treated differently than house additions?
 - Depends of the size of limit of disturbance, still requires building permit.
- Parking requirements may increase impacts to trees.
- Concern that no one is monitoring trees during construction if less than 2.500 sq.ft. of limit of disturbance.

Action item: Nora Palmatier to draft letter for discussion and possible approval at October UFC meeting.

South Park – Bethany Heim, DPR (not listed on agenda due to administrative error by staff liaison)

DPR planner Bethany Heim gave her presentation on the Master Plan for the park currently referred to as South Park.

Items discussed included:

- Quirky county boundary with Alexandria due to old stream bank before flood stabilization.
- Spoil pile from old bridge.
- Some environmental remediation is anticipated from contamination from old Potomac Yard.
- Dog run and associated BMP.
- Net gain in trees and canopy, meadow plantings in floodplain where restricted, riparian ecology interpretation.

Action item: Caroline Haynes to draft letter for discussion and possible approval at October UFC meeting.

Legislative History – Invasive Species – Sarah Archer, DPR

DPR Natural Resources Specialist Sarah Archer gave an overview and update to the current state of invasive species legislation in Virginia, how it may affect Arlington County, and current initiatives that UFC may be interested in investigating and/or encouraging.

Sarah's presentation covered the following:

- Virginia's Noxious Weed Law
- Noxious Weeds Advisory Commission

- Running bamboo enabling legislation
- HB 734 Noxious weeds – 2016 session
- Corporate nurseries issues (still selling invasive in Virginia)

Approval of June Minutes

The July minutes were approved unanimously.

Staff reports

- Tree Canopy Study update
- Urban Forest Master Plan update
- Upcoming park projects
- Large tree removal update
- Site plan updates
- Gables/Three Oak Park update
- New Tree Planting Coordinator
- Reforestation projects in Bluemont

Vincent Verweij – Acting Urban Forest Manager

Staff:

1. We have a new tree planting coordinator, Andrew Knapik. You can reach him at 703-228-7980, or aknapik@arlingtonva.us . Andrew replaces Lois Barb

Tree canopy study

1. A bidder, Davey Trees was picked, to perform the tree canopy study. More information will be provided at the meeting

Schools:

1. Work started for TJ elementary. Trees have been removed (except 1, due to Dominion Energy conflict). APS is working with neighbors to remove impacted off-site trees. The landscape plan is being finalized, as well.
2. Stratford School is going through the latest review.

Parks:

1. Attended meetings on South Park (to be presented). This is currently a fairly bare area, and trees are planned. DES does have restrictions about planting on levees, so there may need to be some adjustment in the design, with more meadow near the stream, and more trees on top.
2. Long Bridge Park: The new phase will likely require significant tree replacement, as a small forest of cottonwoods grew up since the last time this site was surveyed. We are working with parks development to find spaces for these.
3. Roosevelt Island: While not in Arlington, we did submit comments to preserve trees, and restore with native trees.
4. The Glencarlyn park shelter is due for renovation, and I worked with PDD staff to find out what can be done with the shelter, which is in a floodway, floodplain, RPA, near a natural resource conservation area, and next to our old growth forest.

5. DPR met with DES Flood control staff to discuss the impact and mitigation of a potential flood control project in Troy Park, which would remove a significant amount of trees, and impact useable open space in the park, if it went forward.
6. Dawson Terrace is having some redesign done. There are several large ash trees, some of which may have to go, because of root impact. We're still working with designers.

DES:

1. You may be noticing additional DES transportation projects throughout the county. The following are ongoing right now:
 - a. Rt 50 and Park
 - b. Rt 50 and Manchester
 - c. Ohio St and Washington Blvd
 - d. Five Points intersection
 - e. Williamsburg at Sycamore St
2. Windy Run stream restoration is underway

Large By-right projects:

1. The Washington Golf and Country Club is redoing its entire property. The tree impact on the first submission appears high, and foresters will be working to reduce this. It's a by-right project, so no public input will likely be part of the project.

Tree planting:

1. A volunteer project with a large group of a local company's employees will be planting a reforestation in Bluemont Park. We will be working with tree stewards to help with planting oversight for the project.

Site plans:

1. Met with county review staff and the developer for the 1555 Wilson Blvd site plan, to discuss coordination within the WRAP process. There are no major concerns, but planning this will require significant Park Development coordination, for Rosslyn Highlands Park.
2. 4000 Fairfax Dr landscape plan was approved. This is also known as the Carpool site
3. Market Common, the site plan with IOTA, worked with us to improve the streetscape along Wilson, in their design. More to come.
4. The Red Cross site, along Thomas St and Rt. 50, which has significant tree impact, is still being discussed. It may be inevitable, given the design, but I am working to try to improve the long-term canopy there.
5. Three Oaks Park appears to be more like one oak park right now. The second tree did not make it through the summer. The design will have to go through a minor site plan amendment, and new trees will have to be planted.

Planning documents:

1. Vincent met with CPHD staff to move the landscape standards update along.
2. Administrative Regulation 4.3 got its first legal review. We are working with the county attorney to sharpen some points. This will guide soil volume requirements, as well as update to current industry standards.

3. The tree canopy strategy document, prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), was reviewed by Vincent Verweij, and comments will be sent before August 25, on the draft document.

Champion trees:

1. Greg Zell and I measured two trees today, which may be National champion trees, if they get accepted. They're both non-native trees (Sawtooth oak and Dawn Redwood), which may prevent their inclusion, but they're impressive nonetheless.

Outreach:

1. Blog post on trees and health: <https://environment.arlingtonva.us/2017/08/for-your-health-how-trees-can-save-your-life/>
2. A future ad will be placed in the winter Snag, on i-Tree benefits
3. Washington post article on preserving a large (but not old ;)) tree: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-tree-that-survived-the-civil-war-was-just-saved-from-developers-chain-saws/2017/08/11/ae5d3ab4-6be2-11e7-9c15-177740635e83_story.html

Other:

1. Visited White House Nurseries in Luray, VA, with Tree Stewards, to pick better stock for the Tree Canopy Fund, and to understand new nursery practices. The nursery seems to be growing high quality stock, and we hope to be receiving these for planting on private property next year.
2. Assisted sports staff to address questions related to tree impact for the Williamsburg Lighting issue, at the planning commission. No controversial issues regarding trees came up as questions from the board.
3. Attended the ISA conference in early August. Below is my report

Trade show:

1. Electric chainsaws appear to be getting on the same level as gas-powered, and have some advantages. Let's explore this when we purchase chainsaws in the future. Multiple companies seem to be selling them.
2. Treatment of elms with immune improvement. There was a product called Dutchtrig, which was interesting, showing you can treat elms with vaccination, at a fairly low price. The product seemed to be treating hundreds of trees for about \$1,000 plus labor. Not sure it applies too much to us, as our elm stock isn't very high, but worth noting.
3. TreeDiaper research: Some research was done in Richmond, showing positive effects with this product, putting them around trees with a control of more traditional gator bags. Survival seemed better or equal, without watering the treediapers, and watering the gators. I'd like to continue exploring this product.
- 4.

Arboriculture myths

- a. Some practices that appear to have no scientific or practical backing:
 - i. Compost tea
 - ii. Kelp
 - iii. Rock dust
 - iv. "special water"
 - v. Vitamin injections
 - vi. Wound dressing

- vii. “Biodynamics”
- viii. Dowsing
- ix. Fertilizer injection
- x. Intact rootballs during transplanting (bare root works fine)
- xi. Permaculture
- b. Practices that have mixed results:
 - i. Mycorrhizal injections (only when there’s a deficiency, and if the source is not dead)
- c. Coarse organic mulch remains one of the best ways to remediate soils, when applied properly.

Fungal invasion of trees:

1. When you see fruiting bodies, it’s usually too late.
2. Technology to detect decay is still largely inaccurate, but getting better.
3. A hollow tree is not always a high risk tree, unless it has a failed outer wall.
4. Some fungal invasion can benefit the tree, from recycling nutrients inside the dead wood.

Adam Lipera – Urban Forester

Operations

- Continuing to review 311’s, Web Submissions, and customer calls pertaining to County trees. An increasing amount of submissions from the public are being submitted (approximately 30 per week, at this time).
- Receiving assistance from Dominion Energy on several dead/dying County trees in conflict with utilities on 1st Rd N, 18th Rd N, and Key Blvd.
- Performed several tree inspections in Historic Districts, per resident requests. Several sites required tree removals with the approved and agreed upon tree replacements. One site was not granted authorization to remove a healthy tree, at this time.
- Receiving a high amount of requests from the Villages, Wards, and Community Center in Fairlington for crown cleans (which County and contractor crews are working on now), as well as crown thinning (which have deferred to November-December).
- Receiving a high amount of requests from the residents of Addison Heights and Arlington Ridge regarding street trees in decline. These trees are being monitored and also being removed and replanted, where appropriate.

Tree Removals

- Seeing a large number of resident and DES submissions and consequently removals of street trees due to sidewalk and driveway apron damage. In some cases both sidewalk and tree needed removal and replacement. Replacement trees are being scheduled, where appropriate.
- Removing a decent amount of dead ash trees throughout the County, especially in the Glencarlyn Park neighborhoods.
- Removing several dead oak street trees around CHP.
- Removing several dead sycamore street trees around the 600 block of Army Navy Drive.
- Removed several dead County maintained street trees (mostly oaks and sycamores) in Crystal City and currently are in the process of crown cleaning dozens more, per resident requests.
- Champion river birch (dead) was removed from Barcroft/border of the Windgate I community.

Site Plans and Permitting

- Attending/inspecting/reviewing on average 20 preconstruction meetings, certificate of occupancy final inspections, and site plan reviews per week for single family home projects.

Projects

- DED treatment completed on the elm tree at Oakland Park in August by RTEC.
- Testing Cartegraph work order system.

Brian Keightley – Deputy Division Chief, Parks and Natural Resources

Management and Operations

- Working with county purchasing to rebid the tree planting contract. Current contract with Davey Tree has been extended, again, three months to December.
- Kudos to Vincent, he was able to push through our Tree Canopy Study through the purchasing process.
- Fall tree planting order placed, 370 trees and 9 replacements.
- PNR employee Andrew Knapik has been hired as the Tree Planting Coordinator. We'll have him come visit UFC once he gets acclimated to the position.
- Urban Forest Manager position will be open through the competitive hiring process starting in the next week or so.
- Planning for FY19 budget and we are getting creative to keep programs and initiatives moving forward.

Commission Member Reports (provided in advance by email unless otherwise noted)

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group – Caroline Haynes

No meeting in September, but at the August 7 meeting Sarah Archer, Natural Resources Specialist, provided an update on the progress on the rotation of parks through a multi-year invasive removal protocol, and reported that some parks are now moving into maintenance and early detection mode. She also reported on progress with the Cooperative Weed Management Area with our neighboring jurisdictions, which Arlington has been instrumental in developing.

Park and Recreation Commission – Caroline Haynes

In August the commission took a walking field trip of Virginia Highlands Park. John Vihstadt and several members of the public joined the commission as we reviewed recent capital improvement projects such as the tennis courts, basketball courts and spray ground. We discussed issues relating to drainage and future master planning, including the diamond fields, small courts and rectangular fields.

Planning activities (vacant)

Caroline Haynes made a pitch on the importance for making both PFRC and SPRC.

Crystal House II SPRC – Caroline Haynes

During a walk-through of the planned open space as Crystal House III, the majority of SPRC members noted how disturbing and ironic it is that so many magnificent, mature trees would be removed to create a

new park. The reduction of a significant loss of tree canopy will also impact storm water runoff, shade and cooling of the existing buildings on the site. There was also lots of discussion about reducing parking to increase the size of the park, and possibly to retain more of the mature trees. The general feel of this site will change dramatically if these tall canopy trees are removed. Suggestions were made that the park should be designed around the mature trees, rather than slavishly adhering to a linear park design.

Evelio and Nora will jointly try and cover meeting for Red Cross and 6711 Lee Highway. Ed Hilz said that he will try to attend PFRC.

Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (vacant)

From Nora - next meeting is Tues. Feb. 26 at Courthouse with agenda items of bus parking and Career Center issues. UFC does not have an assigned representative to JFAC. Any member interested in following their work?

Public Facilities Advisory Commission (vacant)

From Nora - The Reed School (in Westover) is the next project to be considered and UFC needs a representative and an alternate. This will be a challenging one since it is attached to the library and located in a popular park. Tree impact will depend on how the building is renovated. Any member interested in following or being an alternate?

Rosslyn Highlands Park – Steve Campbell

No report

Four Mile Run Valley Visioning – Nora Palmatier

Caroline Haynes and Nora Palmatier were on the Dog Park Committee and our 50 page report is at <https://arlingtonva.s3.dualstack.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/04/4MRV-SDPC-Report-FINAL-Complete.pdf> Appendix C is about the problems of trees in a dog park. Basically, the report states dog parks do not belong in a RPA yet this one should remain for the time being as there is no funding to rehabilitate area, and environmental degradation of other areas by dogs if this was shut down is not advised. One bright spot is that the volunteer Shirlington Dogs II is reenergized to monitor and educate dog owners.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier

Thanks to Evelio R, Brian K., and John C. for serving on the application review committee for the education grants, which should be announced in mid-October. The tree survey is going very well with over 3/4 of the data entered for the 1700 trees. Over 24 volunteers have been involved! The results will be presented to UFC and ACE by next meeting, then to the County Board. The majority of trees planted since 2009 are healthy and thriving, yet it's too early to come up with percentages found.

Tree Stewards – Steve Campbell

1. Tree Stewards have a lot going on this fall. A list of some of the activities follows-
2. Tree Stewards and Master Naturalists were essential help in completing the survey of the 1700 Tree Canopy Fund trees planted since the program began. The chief goal of the survey is to evaluate how successful the program is, to determine survival rates of the trees planted.
3. The County's Free Tree Distribution takes place 10/14 and 10/18. One 2-gallon containerized tree "whip" can be reserved by citizens and picked up either 10/14 or 10/18. Currently five tree

species are left to choose from. Tree Stewards greet those picking up their trees, answer questions, and provide information. Often children accompany their parents. It is a great event!

<https://environment.arlingtonva.us/register-for-your-free-tree/>

4. TS are staffing tree information tables at farmers markets and native plant sales (notably Earth Sangha and the Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale), and also have several ongoing invasive plant removal projects.
5. TS will be assisting the National Park Service with rehabilitating an area along the GW Parkway that was previously the Sesquicentennial Grove (near Rosslyn). It is now overgrown with non-native trees, shrubs and vines. NPS will do a major invasive removal. TS will do follow-up work and also help in planning
6. TS received a request to assist Forestry staff by surveying trees planted by their contractor. TS verify whether the correct species was planted, that trees were planted in the proper location, and to assess the condition of each tree.
7. Tree Stewards of Arlington/Alexandria (TSAA) has received a grant from TD Bank to coordinate and assist TD employees in their tree planting project.

Northern Virginia Urban Forest Roundtable – Nora Palmatier

November 9 Conference, Sterling, VA Urban Forests and Your Health: How Trees Can Save Your Life
Agenda and registration info will be sent soon.

Single Family Homes – Nora Palmatier

No report.

Ordinance Adjustments for Tree Preservation – Nora Palmatier

This item was added last winter and assigned to Nora. I've reviewed the current practices and do not have any suggestions for strengthening. Unless another member of UFC wants to spearhead this project with further research and recommendations, I think it should be removed from ongoing agendas.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Commission – Phil Klingelhofer

No report.

Public Spaces Master Plan

Caroline - Public comment on the preliminary draft of the plan was open from July 11 through August 31. Many comments were received and staff and consultants are working through those now to capture and categorize the feedback. The POPS Advisory Committee is planning to have two meetings in October to review the comments and work through some of the remaining outstanding issues. For example, more specific recommendations on field lighting are likely to be addressed.

Nora - The next committee meeting is Oct. 5 at Courthouse. No action needed at this time.

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission - Kimberly Fedinatz

No report

Virginia Department of Forestry – Jim McGlone

- First urban forestry group meeting held at VDOF.
- VDOF received a grant for a part-time EAB specialist.
- Chesapeake Bay Program Urban Tree BMP; 300 tree planted = 1 acre of land use change.
 - VDOF published its Community Forest Storm Mitigation Planning guide for Virginia Communities.

Arlington Public Schools – Gerald Brandt

The trees removed for trailer installation at Patrick Henry and Oak Ridge schools were replaced.

Virginia Cooperative Extension – Kirsten Buhls

No report

New Business

Discussion on Accessory Dwellings presentation

Discussion on letter for “South Park”

Next Meeting

October 26, 2017 – Arlington Trades Center, Parks Small Conference Room