

**Urban Forestry Commission
December 21, 2017
Meeting Summary**

Attendance

Nora Palmatier, Chair
Kit Norland
Caroline Haynes
Brian Keene
Sherry Frear
Paul Campanella
Phil Klingelhofer
Steve Campbell
David Howell – PRC rep

State and County Staff

Brian Keightley, DPR Liaison
Vincent Verweij, DPR

Guests

Josh Handler
Scott Goodwyn
Suzanne Sundburg
Brian Nolan, NVRPA
Michael Nardolilli, NVRPA
Paul Gilbert, NVRPA

Guests, Commissioners and Staff – Introductions and Sign-in

Public Comment

1. A request for additional funding for maintenance was made by Scott Goodwyn, resident near the Palisades Park. A suggestion was made to use the utility tax for funding of tree maintenance.
2. Josh Handler spoke about concerns regarding the Upton Hill Regional Park Improvements, specifically questioning whether there is a need for additional parking, and asking for maintenance funding for trash and invasive plants in the park. Mr. Handler also noted the park does not match the Neighborhood Conservation Plan.
3. Suzanne Sundburg expressed concerns about tree loss from the proposed Upton Hill Regional Park Improvements. Specifically addressed were her concerns about a lack of tree inventory, too much parking proposed, economic data to support the improvements, and insecurity about maintenance funding.

Upton Hill Regional Park Improvements, Brian Nolan, NVRPA

After introductions, a presentation was provided on the improvements. NVRPA staff pointed out areas of previously disturbed areas, which were prioritized for redevelopment, and areas for reforestation potential.

Kit Norland raised the following concerns:

1. Was outreach done in Spanish? (NVRPA: no)
2. Prioritize areas of low impact
3. Protect special trees
4. Provide native landscaping

Nora Palmatier asked which arborist company was used. NVRPA stated Urban was the company used.

Caroline Haynes expressed support from the PRC for the plan, but comments on tree loss did happen, as there was little information on tree impact.

Phil Klingelhofer stated that the perception of the plan is that natural space is respected. Also asked for a tree inventory. Wondered why a large lot is needed for a playground.

Paul Gilbert (NVRPA) explained their perceived need for parking

Nora Palmatier asked to clarify about the property lines

Paul Gilbert responded the property lines are cut off due to the county boundary

Kit Norland asked for responses on public comments:

1. Invasives and trash? Response: Maintenance is constant, and more maintenance is being done now. 20% of time spent on invasive plants.
2. Multi-modal Transportation not considered over parking? Response: Park is regional, and needs to expect car traffic from other areas.
3. Can lighting be minimized? Response: yes, but some areas were noted by the survey to be underlit, and they will be addressed.

Steve Campbell asked for the tree survey. Response: Tree survey will be released soon. Steve also asked for more tree islands. Vincent Verweij noted that the zoning ordinance will likely ask for more.

Nora Palmatier noted that the UFC would need an arborist report before sending a letter of support.

Phil Klingelhofer asked what the deadline for this project is? Response: no deadline set

Sherry Frear asked whether there was funding. Response: yes

2018 Work Plan Exercise – Nora Palmatier

Nora Palmatier reported on the standard process for preparing the report and work plan.

Caroline Haynes asked whether it is appropriate for this plan to contain items of advocacy. Also suggested removing steps already completed, and adding new steps from the UFMP to complete in the work plan.

There was a discussion on inclusion of topics.

Sherry Frear will go through the 2017 Minutes to find achievements for the year's report and work plan, by the January meeting.

Brian Keane suggested adding a topic to increase focus on preservation of trees on private property.

Vincent Verweij suggested removing the soil volume and maximized street trees from the plan, as these are achieved, and adding trees as stormwater BMPs

It was suggested to add a bullet on Planning for By-Right Development

There was more discussion on SITES, biophilic cities, tree inventories, and working with the City Nature Challenge.

Commission review of the 2004 Urban Forest Master Plan – Nora Palmatier and Brian Keightley

Agenda item not discussed at meeting.

Approval of November Minutes

Minutes approved unanimously

Staff reports

Vincent Verweij

General planning:

1. Tree canopy report. This report is going to the county manager soon, and we will be able to release more information after he looks at it.
2. Administrative Regulation for planting on public land (and soil volume). This was reviewed by leadership, and will also be going to the county manager soon. More to come, but this is in the final stretch.+
3. Landscape standards: CPHD worked very hard, with our assistance, to make a more accessible, and legible, landscape standards document. This is one of the most concise, effective documents I've seen of this kind, so on behalf of CPHD, I recommend taking a look at this:
<https://building.arlingtonva.us/project/landscape-tree-preservation-plans/>
4. Our Tree City USA application went out, with a Growth award application. We expect to receive both awards.
5. Thanks to Steve Campbell for presenting on the Tree Canopy Fund success to the county board.
6. POPS: Staff helped with a coordinated effort to get more input on the POPS plan, with regards to trees, natural resources, and casual space, on 12/14/17. Staff took back a long list of great constructive comments to work with in our plan.
7. Impacts from LDA projects on trees: Staff started collecting data on LDA projects, on private and public trees removed, preserved, and planted. As we get more information, we will start reporting high-level statistics on this.

DES projects:

1. Windy Run stream restoration: work is ongoing, and we are monitoring tree protection. Some additional trees were impacted, due to additional erosion, unrelated to the project. These trees were taken down, and will be replaced. They had no chance of long-term survival.
2. Washington Boulevard Bike Trail: This project is starting in January, and you will see the removal of trees for the path. All trees will be replaced, including trees that were already removed by VDOT, for their retaining wall.
3. Carlin Springs bridge: This bridge will be removed and replaced. Several trees are being preserved for the project, thanks to the cooperation of DPR and DES. We will continue to monitor the work.

Parks:

1. Long Bridge Park design was approved by the board. More to come, as the designs move forward. As a forest grew up in the time the design was being redone, many more trees will have to be replaced in this project.
2. Oakland Park will likely begin soon, preserving a large elm in the park, and providing new planting, with the design.
3. Nellie Custis Park: A tree-sensitive redesign of the park is underway, and designs are being finalized to improve the canopy in this area

4. Reeves Farmhouse: Both the house is being brought up to building code, and a connector trail will be installed to the Four Mile Run trail, which will include additional tree planting. Very little tree impact exists in these projects.
5. Benjamin Banneker park project was approved by the board, which includes some enhancements to canopy and natural resources.
6. Rosslyn Highlands Park: Design is being finalized, and forestry is working to ensure it meets the design guidelines set out in the WRAP process
7. Glencarlyn Park Shelter renovation: This shelter is in an NRCA, floodplain, RPA, and next to the old growth forest. All efforts are being made to reduce impact to trees. A handful of medium-sized trees may be impacted, and will be replaced.

Site plans:

1. Red Cross Site: a redesign was submitted. The applicant is trying to find space on other nearby properties for tree replacement. Little tree preservation is occurring on site.
2. Market Common: A renovation of the building across from Whole foods is finalizing planning. This will take out some street trees, but provide better soil space for the trees to be replaced.
3. Virginia Hospital center: Construction of a parking garage and facilities is planned. No preservation of trees on site is proposed. Staff is working to provide a landscape that will work to improve the healing aspect of trees and nature into the design.
4. Crystal Houses 3: A redesign is saving more trees than previously, thanks to public and staff support. Significant tree impact will still occur. Applicant is also saving some trees that may not survive the project, but not counting them for canopy, and planning for replacement.
5. 2000 Clarendon Blvd: Applicant is still working on finding space for on-site canopy with sufficient soil space. This project will likely increase canopy on this particular lot, once that's figured out.
6. Several site plans are nearing completion: 400 Army Navy Dr, 2311 Wilson Blvd, Colony House, 672 Flats, 1411 Key Blvd, Columbia Hills, are close to completing their exterior, and staff will be guiding the construction to ensure compliance.

APS:

1. Reed school options are being reviewed by staff. Some of the options may impact the larger grove of trees on site, or the county champion black walnut tree in the corner open space. Please see <https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/public-facilities-review-committee-pfrc/school-projects/walter-reed/> for more information

Champion trees:

1. Amazing news, we have a National Co-Champion Dwarf Hackberry in our county! It's at Arlington National Cemetery, and shares the recognition with one of the Alexandria specimens. We also re-measured the state champion Dawn Redwood, and it remains the largest of its kind in the state!

Tree planting:

1. Andrew Knapik is coordinating with our tree planting coordinator to ensure planting is done properly, and to find alternate sites where site characteristics have changed.

Maintenance and removals:

1. See Adam Lipera's email. Maintenance requests are lower in the winter. We plan to send reports on removals and replacements on a more bi-annual basis.

Outreach:

1. Vincent Verweij presented on Arlington county's streetscape policies, to Master Gardeners, Tree Stewards, the general public, and local arborists and landscape architects, alongside Alexandria's landscape architect. It was well-attended, and a good discussion was had on best practices.

Did you know?

1. We have a general email address for urban forestry. Please share urbanforestry@arlingtonva.us with anyone who has questions for us, as we can all read this email folder, and address questions or concerns.

Adam Lipera

Operations

- Continuing to review 311's, Web Submissions, and customer calls pertaining to County trees. We are receiving approximately 20-25 submissions per week. All requests/tasks are being worked through our new work order system, Cartegraph.
- Removing several dead oak street trees around CHP within the next few weeks.
- Removed 9 dead sycamore street trees around the 600 block of Army Navy Drive during the first week of December. This area will be replanted.
- Removed 2 dying ash trees at Long Branch Nature Center.
- Removed 9 dead/dying street trees along N Glebe Road by the Harris Teeter and Mercedes dealership. This area will be replanted.
- Removing 3 dead/dying trees at Big Walnut Park within the next 2 weeks, per the request of Kevin Stalica, PSA 1 Manager.
- Met with APS (Steven Bernheisel) at Washington Lee HS to discuss the removal and replacement of several dead/declining/vacant street trees as well as elevating limbs of the same street trees that are conflicting with cars in the parking lanes and pedestrians on the sidewalks. Also met at Wakefield HS to discuss the maintenance and removal/replacement of several trees on school property.

Site Plans and Permitting

- Attending/inspecting/reviewing on average 15-20 preconstruction meetings, certificate of occupancy final inspections, and site plan reviews per week for single family home projects.

Other

- Passed the field and written exam and earned my Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ). :))
- Conducted the skills test interview for 7 applicants for the vacant tree maintenance worker position.
- Distributed notable tree plaques to the 2017 recipients.
- Mailed notification letters to the 4 specimen tree nominees with updated County Board date/time information for their potential adoption (Brian also submitted all the needed documents to the County Board for the January meeting).

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

Natural Resources Joint Advisory Group – Caroline Haynes

Park and Recreation Commission – Caroline Haynes

At Tuesday's meeting we heard a presentation on the update of the Bike Element of the Master Transportation Plan. Issues were raised about the conflict of trees and bike trails, with Transportation Chair Chris Slatt noting that they are working on increased flexibility in tree planting next to bike trails. We also discussed the Advisory Group Handbook and the objectives of working to reach consensus in PRC deliberations.

PRC sent the attached letters on Virginia Highlands Park and the 2017 PRC annual report.

Planning activities

Four Mile Run Working Group - Dissension in the working group members as to whether the current buildings owned by County in block west of Nelson should be held for arts, torn down and turned into casual open space, or rebuilt with ball courts on top. Everyone agrees trees should be everywhere - except where they want their priority. No action needed by UFC at this time but we'll want to weigh in soon.

Arlington Hospital - John Carey attended first meeting. He spoke up about the poor condition of street trees currently which are the Hospital's responsibility and need to ensure ongoing care of new trees. Members of Planning Commission took up comments on trees.

Housing Conservation Districts - UFC needs a representative to participate in the staff advisory group. The County Board recently approved the establishment of a Housing Conservation district in 12 neighborhoods. The district is intended to prevent the loss of market-rate affordable housing, to encourage and incent the distribution of affordable housing throughout the County, and to preserve and enhance existing apartment neighborhoods, consistent with adopted policies from both the Affordable Housing Master Plan and General Land Use Plan. One of the Goals of the HCD is to “maintain the character of established multiple-family areas, considering historic buildings, tree canopies, mix of affordability, and mix of rental vs. ownership housing.” A second phase of work related to the development of incentives for the Housing Conservation District will take place in 2018. Incentives will range from rehabilitation alternatives through redevelopment. As part of the public engagement strategy for Phase II a Housing Conservation District Advisory Group will be formed to advise staff throughout phase II. The County Board directed staff to include a representative from the Urban Forestry Commission in this advisory group. We anticipate one meeting per month for the duration of Phase II work, which will likely be 10 to 11 months. The time of meetings will be established subject to members availability. Additional information on the Housing Conservation District can be found at <https://housing.arlingtonva.us/affordable-housing/housing-conservation-district>

Sherry Frear volunteered at the meeting to be the contact for the Housing Conservation work group. This topic will be added to the commission member reports.

Tree Canopy Fund – Nora Palmatier

Steve Campbell gave presentation to Board Dec. 19. Deadline for current trees was Dec. 15 and 180 tree requests were received. We have preordered 210 trees. I will make motion this evening that ACE approve additional requests for remaining trees. Some species (sassafras, sweet gum, bald cypress, basswood) are over requested but others such as hornbeam, hophornbeam, red oak) have sufficient left to do second choice and request more applicants. UFC needs at least 3 commissioners to review the applications Thursday Dec. 11 and Tuesday Dec. 16, 6:30 - 9

Tree Stewards – Steve Campbell

- The annual meeting/holiday party was held earlier this month, with officer/board elections and a review of the year. It was an enthusiastic gathering- 40 Tree Stewards attended.
- The group headed up by Hugh Robinson was asked to limb up street trees around the perimeter of Washington Lee School.
- They also finished up a tree pruning and invasive removal project at Big Walnut Park (N. Harrison & 20th).
- Now that trees are dormant, throughout the winter the group will focus more on pruning to improve the structural form of smaller trees for the Parks Dept and APS (whatever can be accessed without a ladder).
- Winter is also a great time for invasive plants plant removal projects.

Northern Virginia Urban Forest Roundtable – Nora Palmatier

Planning group will meet in January to schedule for year.

Single Family Homes – Nora Palmatier

No report this month.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Commission – Phil Klingelhofer

Due to the decision made at the October NCAC meeting vote to defer the December NC Project funding round until next Spring (below), no meeting was held in December. NCAC members were urged to work with civic associations to express support of increased funding for NC projects. Sample letters are attached.

October 12, 2017 NCAC Discussion of December Funding Round and 2018 Bond. Based on the remaining balance of funds from the 2016 Bond, and the potential for additional cost overruns for approved projects, the NCAC voted to defer the December funding round and revisit the situation next Spring. Given the significant increases in the cost of projects over the past five years, due to significant construction cost increases and costs of additional regulatory and other requirements on construction projects by Arlington County and Virginia, it is clear that fewer and fewer projects can be funded unless the NC Bond is increased. Neighborhood representatives were asked to work with their civic associations for letters to the County urging that the 2018 Bond be increased from \$12 million to \$18 million. Samples of past letters are attached.

The next NCAC meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2018. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Public Spaces Master Plan – Caroline Haynes

Three public outreach sessions were held in December to drill down on some of the key issues that came out of the initial public comment period in July and August: 1) land acquisition, 2) synthetic fields and lighting, and 3) casual use spaces, natural resources and trees. Each session had a different format, designed to assist with the feedback on each topic. Bryna Helfer worked with DPR staff to design the sessions and she facilitated all but the one on land acquisition. Turnout was good for all three events, and there was spirited discussion at all three. Staff is collating comments from these and previous events and

will be making those available to the public. The working group anticipates scheduling a work session with the county board early in 2018, to be followed by a more refined draft.

Many thanks to UFC members who participated in these events.

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission - Kimberly Fedinatz

No report this month.

Virginia Department of Forestry – Jim McGlone

No report this month.

Arlington Public Schools – Jim Meikle

No report this month.

Virginia Cooperative Extension – Kirsten Ann Conrad

No report this month.

New Business

No new business added to January meeting.

Next Meeting

January 25, 2017 at 7pm – Courthouse Plaza – Room 311