



Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 16, 2022 ❖ 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

NOTICE: This meeting was held pursuant to and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3708.2 and state and local legislation adopted to allow for continued government operation during the COVID-19 declared emergency. All participating members will be present at this meeting through electronic means. All members of the public may view this electronic meeting via the meeting link listed above and in the City's website calendar.

Attendees

UFC members: Amy Crumpton, Stephanie Lamore, David DeCoste, Mike Nichols
UFC City Staff Liaison: Charles Prince
City Council Liaison: Letty Hardi
UFC Student Representative: Dylan Petrillo
City Staff:
Members of the Public: Jennifer Anderson, Allison Miller, Tim Roche
Other guests:

- 1) **Call to Order** - the meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Amy Crumpton.
- 2) **Reading of Virtual Meeting Notice** - was read by Amy Crumpton.
- 3) **Roll Call** - meeting participants identified themselves.
- 4) **Approval of the [February Minutes](#)** - the February 2022 meeting minutes were approved.
- 5) **Public Comments** - there were no public comments.
- 6) **Staff Updates and Informational Items:**
 - a) City Council [Update Calendar](#) - Mr. Prince identified the following items:
Mar. 21 works session for Founders 2. There is pressure for the builders to complete Founders 1, before moving onto the Founders 2 project. Charles urged the public

to provide comments to the city clerk regarding thoughts on Founders 2. City Council has made some revisions to the original plan that included a wider and longer walking path between the new building and the strip mall to the north.

East End Area Plan

Budget Town Hall on Mar. 31 - this meeting will be open to the public

April 11 is the Arbor Day proclamation. Charles has the schedule of activities near completion and will send it to the UFC upon completion

April 19 - 6 p.m. - The City Hall dedication event for former council member Dan Sze.

April 20 - Mayor and City Council Office Hours for City of Falls Church citizens.

April 21 - City Council Town Hall at 7 p.m.

Letty informed those on the call that overall real estate values increased 14%.

April 25 - the works session for the final budget which will be approved on May 2.

- b) Staff Update - Charles stated that two new people have been hired. The open crew leader position will now be hired as an urban forester which will be a higher paid position. This will help attract a more experienced person. This change will allow Charles to focus more on his role as arborist. Letty Hardi asked Charles for a current assessment of the staffing situation - what was the history: how many people were on staff, how many are on staff today and what's needed? Amy added that the additional people will allow the UFC to collect more data, which will be helpful for upcoming reviews and assessments of the current UFC status in the city.

Letty asked about the management of streetscapes. Charles stated that in some cases it is the city's responsibility and in other cases it is the property owners. There are pros/cons for each scenario. The city would typically do a better job than the property owner, but there is a cost involved and employee resources need to be met.

Amy noted that a streetscape document was created by the UFC but the recommended document was amended so all the UFC recommendations were not accepted. Letty stated that this amended document is being followed, despite not being the ideal standard according to the UFC. Alison Miller asked if Charles has data on how much time is spent on each park so that we know what is needed. Charles stated that he doesn't have the time to input this data. Alison offered to attempt to compile a report based on his schedule. Charles replied that he will share what data he has available. Amy noted that Jeremy may have had some of this data, but we're not sure how accessible it may be.

- c) Dedication from Dan Sze - this topic was discussed during the *City Council Update Calendar* discussion.
- d) UFC Candidate - this topic was discussed during the *staff updates portion* of the meeting.
- e) Correction of VPIS NTP 2022 budget - Amy stated the Neighborhood Tree Program (NTP) has about \$2,900 in donation money to plant trees in 2022. This money comes from the Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS). In 2021 VPIS spent about \$6k. Citizens can complete a form to apply for a "free" tree provided by VPIS. Historically, the city or a hired contractor would help plant these trees. Amy also noted that the cost for trees has greatly increased. Charles stated that this is a significant amount of work, but it does provide a high level of value. The VPIS donations have seen

a decline, especially since they haven't had a table at the Farmer's Market to solicit donations. Amy said that Charles's goal is to plant 100 trees per year and VPIS has been a significant contributor to that goal. Mike asked if we could create more synergy between the three groups: UFC, VPIS and City Arborist and that we should consider targeting specific neighborhoods. The suggestion was made for one or more of the new UFC members to formally get involved with this initiative.

7) Current Business

- a) Electronic participation policy for meetings - Charles showed the template but stated that the UFC will have some flexibility. However, the general assembly will likely provide new guidance soon. Charles asked if Amy would take the lead on this policy and inform him how the UFC would like to proceed. Letty said the state of Virginia has lifted its state of emergency. Locally, we're still in a state of emergency, but it is expected to be lifted soon, however no date has been set. By adopting this policy the UFC will have flexibility with UFC members being allowed to participate remotely (2 times per year or 25% of the time). Dave suggested that the incoming UFC members vote on this during the next meeting since they're the ones being impacted by the decision. Stephanie expressed a desire to continue to offer virtual attendance for the public, should they want to participate. Charles suggested we table the discussion for next month - he will discuss this with the clerk's office and how we can allow virtual access for residents. He stated that it would be a minor lift for him to add a virtual option for members of the public.
- b) [2021 State of Our Urban Forest](#) - City of Falls Church - Amy presented this document. It includes a high level summary like: City-wide canopy coverage, number of trees planted in the previous year, the number of specimen trees. She used data from Tree Keeper to explain the benefits and value of our urban tree forest. The document underscores our needs for new data as our most current data is from 2012. Amy asked for feedback on the draft. Stephanie thought it was a solid summary. Mike added that including invasive insects would be useful. Charles noted that our summary from February 2020 showed a 49.2% canopy coverage which is defined as a birds eye view percentage of ground being covered by trees. Charles said that most trees are being lost due to development. Letty asked about the data comparison increase from 47% to 49.2%. Charles noted that it may not be a true comparison because the resolution data is improving, so we're getting more accurate data. The belief is that the city is doing a good job maintaining a good tree canopy coverage - over the past several years, the city has been planting a better quality of native trees and removing invasive trees like bamboo. Stephanie volunteered to help with the iTree program to determine the data and where the hot spots are for tree canopy coverage. Amy asked Charles to provide a tutorial on Tree Keeper during the next UFC meeting. Amy also identified the challenge with the data since it doesn't have an accurate picture of the trees located on private property. Stephanie asked if the iTree data provides any historical data - but Charles wasn't sure.
- c) [UFC Annual Report 2021](#) - Amy reviewed the draft of this document. Amy said that in Feb. 2021, code changes needed to be updated as a result of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (1988, amended 2015). The annual report will include the *State of the Urban Forest* document reviewed earlier in the meeting. Amy wants Charles to confirm

that the requests made by the UFC help support the initiatives of the city arborist or is there other language that he would like to add. Charles responded that he would like to add community outreach to one of the open positions; improve the level of volunteer outreach - ensure that person is involved with the volunteer activities. He would like to see this new person get involved with other community programs. This will allow Charles to attend other board and commission meetings to improve the synergy between the UFC and the other commissions. The Habitat Restoration Group has been leading clean up, planting, and invasive plant removals by working with Charles. Jeremy and his team used to lead these efforts, but since they left the city, the Habitat Restoration Group has picked up the slack. Amy will initiate the process to get this annual report on an upcoming city council agenda.

- d) NOVA Comparative Landscaped Open Space Requirements - Amy presented this document that shows the *Tree Canopy* and the *Landscaped Open Space* requirements for the City of Falls Church versus Arlington County versus the City of Alexandria. All the areas are following the Virginia State Code, but tailoring its rule to meet its needs. The replacement part of the code makes the most sense for these areas since they are smaller areas. Amy noted how each area uses the code in different means. This document was created for our UFC to view and should we consider adopting some of the policies enforced in Arlington County? Amy thinks it may be helpful to have a similar comparison for residential canopy requirements. Letty suggested the UFC and/or the City of Alexandria? The UFC will review these items and determine what actionable items can be presented to city council. Letty suggested using these UFC meetings as work sessions with other commissions.
- e) Outgoing UFC Members Appreciation - Dave DeCoste and Mike Nichols expressed their appreciation for their time working on the UFC and wished all the current and new members success.

8) Future Business

- a) Counting Tree Plantings (My Tree Counts)
- b) Green Infrastructure Plan/Standards
- c) Biophilic Cities
- d) UF Management Plan
- e) UFC Standard Maintenance Agreements
- f) TOTY Revision
- g) UF Code Changes
- h) Outreach / Publicity
- i) Memorial or Commemorative Tree Designation Process
- j) Stormwater Task Force Coordination

9) Adjourn - the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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