

PLANNING COMMUNICATOR

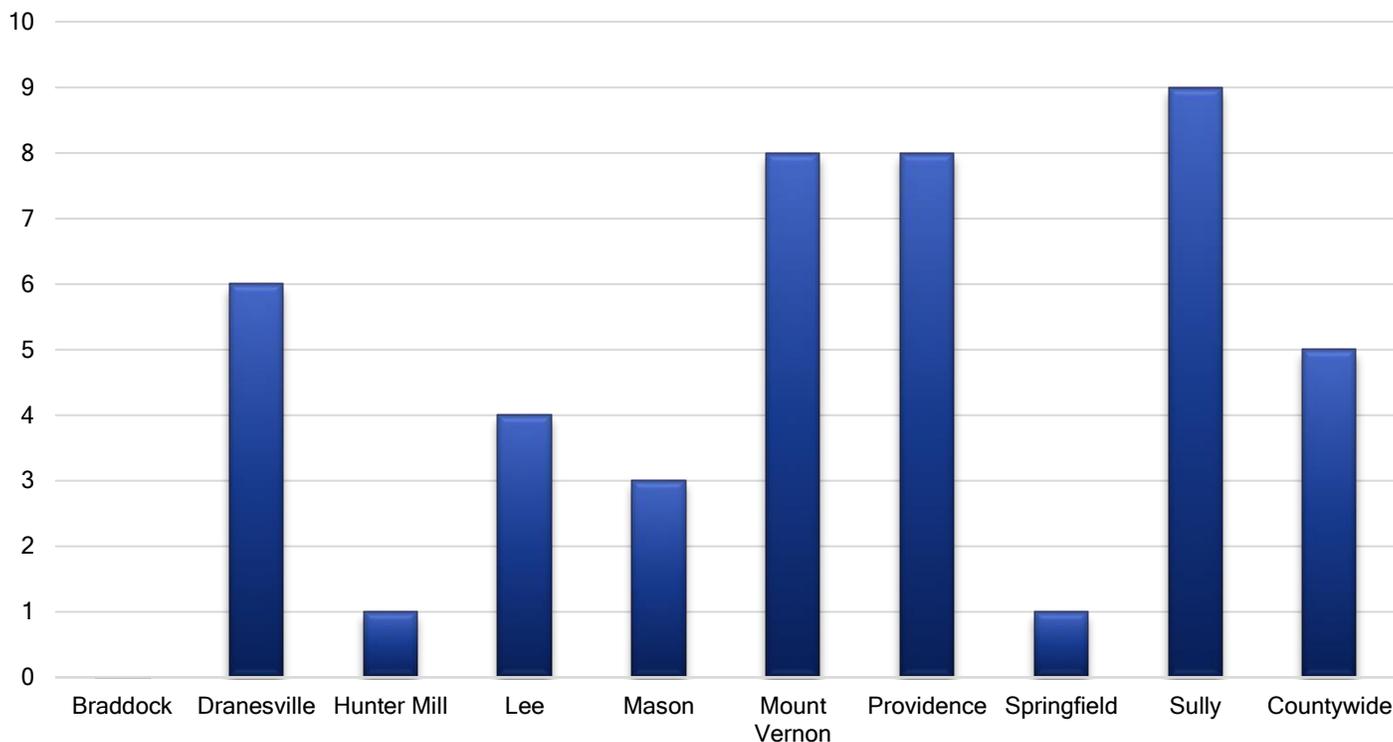
April 2019

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planningcommission>

LAND USE ACTIONS

In the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2019, the Planning Commission took action on **45** applications during its **12** public hearings. The Planning Commission heard verbal testimony from **103** speakers during this quarter. The district with the highest number of applications considered was the Sully District, with **9** applications acted upon.

3rd Quarter FY 2019



COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Land Use Process Review Committee

At the March 7th meeting the committee was constituted for 2019. James T. Migliaccio elected as Chairman and Ellen J. Hurley elected as Vice Chairman. The Zoning Administration staff provided an update on the Zoning Ordinance Modernization Project (zMOD) for the Agriculture and Commercial Uses sections. The committee also received a presentation on the proposed Community Gardens and Farmers Market Zoning Ordinance amendment, scheduled for public hearing on April 24, 2019.

Committee Activity - Continued

Schools Committee

Met six times during the last three months to continue discussing the implementation of the Work Program, specifically Economic Development and Equity and Access to schools and facilities in relation to the One Fairfax initiative. At their last meeting on March 28th, the policy plan language was finalized and voted unanimously to endorse to the full Planning Commission a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to authorize advertising for changes to the Policy Plan. The committee was constituted for 2019 at the February 28th meeting, with Tim J. Sargeant elected as Chairman and Julie M. Strandlie elected as Vice Chairman.

Housing Committee

Met on March 6th for a presentation from the Department of Housing and Community Development on affordable housing in Fairfax County. The committee was constituted for 2019, with Julie M. Strandlie elected as Chairman.

Environment Committee

Met on January 24 to review and discuss with Planning Division staff the draft plan language for the Green Building Energy Policy Plan, Policy b, revised from the November 9, 2017 meeting and voted unanimously to endorse the January 24th revised version. On February 21st the committee was constituted for 2019, with James R. Hart elected as Chairman and Mary D. Cortina elected as Vice Chairman. At the same meeting, the Committee received a presentation by the Virginia Department of Environment Quality staff on the development of a Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) for Northern Virginia. The Planning Division staff introduced a Policy Plan amendment addressing coastal resource management guidance. On March 21st the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, along with Planning Division staff, provided a presentation and overview on the proposed Policy Plan amendment for natural landscaping at County facilities.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee

At the February 28th meeting the Committee was constituted for 2019, with Tim J. Sargeant elected as Chairman and Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner elected as Vice Chairman. The Department of Management and Budget staff provided a presentation on the Fiscal Year 2020 – 2024 CIP in preparation for the combined CIP workshop and public hearing scheduled for March 13th. On March 21st, staff discussed with the committee responses to questions raised during the workshop/public hearing along with potential Planning Commission motions.

Telecommunications Committee

Met on January 16 for a presentation from planning staff regarding a new telecommunications permit, Administrative Review Eligible Projects Permit (AREP) and the Consent Agenda process, and to discuss the Commissions role in the review of AREPs. The Committee voted to recommend approval to the full Commission of an amended resolution. On February 27th the committee was constituted for 2019, with Peter F. Murphy elected as Chairman and John C. Ulfelder as Vice Chairman. The committee also received a presentation on the proposed Wireless Telecommunication Zoning Ordinance Amendment and the proposed Mobile and Land-Based Telecom Policy Plan Amendments.

PC ROUNDTABLE WITH CHAIRMAN PETER F. MURPHY



The Planning Commission Roundtable is a 30-minute panel discussion broadcast every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday at 10:30 p.m. on Channel 16. Episodes can also be viewed through Video on Demand at the Fairfax County website:

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable/channel16/pc_roundtable.htm

One Fairfax – Broadcast January 2019

One Fairfax is a joint social and racial equity policy adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the School Board. It commits the county and schools to intentionally consider equity when making policies or delivering programs and services.

Guest: Karla Bruce, Chief Equity Officer for Fairfax County

Health in All Policies – Broadcast February 2019

Health in All Policies encourages the consideration of health implications at all stages of policymaking to avoid harmful health impacts, support positive health outcomes, and promote health equity.

Guest: Anna Ricklin, Health in All Policies Manager

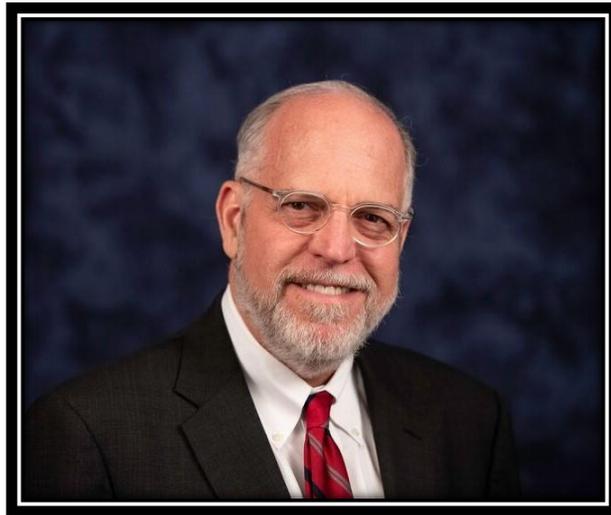
Park Authority 10-Year Master Plan – Broadcast March 2019

The 10-Year Master Plan includes goals and recommendations that inform the policy framework for Park Authority plans, programs, and initiatives.

Guests: Kirk Kincannon, Executive Director, Fairfax County Park Authority
Mary Cortina, At-Large Planning Commissioner

DISTRICT BUZZ – COMMISSIONER JAMES R. HART

At-Large - A PERSPECTIVE ON PUBLIC HEARINGS. One thing I have learned about public hearings: you never know what is going to happen. 2019 is my 20th year on the Board of Zoning Appeals, and my 16th year on the Planning Commission. I have seen pretty much every conceivable type of land use application in that time, and any number of surprises. Some cases are more interesting than others; many cases take longer than we might like. One so-called “slam dunk” case with no speakers signed up in advance ended up as a many headed monster with a parade of unexpected speakers. Some cases started out extremely controversial, but ended quietly, with no drama.



Whether or not surprises materialize, the public hearing process is critically important to the Commission performing its statutory function. The General Assembly, in its wisdom, requires advertising and an open public hearing process involving the Commission, before a comprehensive plan change is adopted, before a zoning ordinance amendment is enacted, and before a rezoning or special exception is approved, among other actions.

Our job as planning commissioners is advisory; we conduct a vetting process on certain types of land use applications. We provide an opportunity for community input, listen carefully, and formulate a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. That vetting process, after our professional staff has reviewed the application and made its own recommendation, often after the applicant has met with citizen groups and neighbors, and made revisions to the application, culminates in a public hearing before the Commission, where citizen speakers are welcome to address the Commission and offer suggestions and criticism. No land use application can move forward to the Board of Supervisors without that critical step. In order for the Commission to make its recommendation, a meaningful public hearing usually needs to take place.

Fairfax County has a long tradition of robust citizen involvement in the public hearing process. Some cases attract controversy; others are ignored. Sometimes speakers sign up in advance to speak, sometimes they just show up. In recent years, we have received many more comments by

DISTRICT BUZZ - CONTINUED

COMMISSIONER JAMES R. HART

email. Occasionally what comes up at the public hearing is unexpected, but when there are changes resulting from that discussion, almost always, the application is improved. I cannot recall an application that got worse as a result of the public hearing, or a Commission recommendation that was not improved as a result of the open discussion of an application. A citizen comment also may highlight an issue that the staff might not have raised, and of which the commissioners may not have been aware, at least initially.

Fairfax County also benefits from a Planning Commission membership which represents a diverse cross section of County residents. During my years on the Commission, I have always been impressed by the talent and insight of the commissioners, their level of independence, the amount of outreach and preparation they do before the public hearings, their collaborative spirit, their high ethical standards, and the variety of experience they bring to the process. This diversity helps ensure that a variety of constructive questions are asked, by individuals who may have different perspectives on the application and are willing to listen to various points of view. Our deliberations benefit from hearing all sides, and a thorough vetting process usually results in a consensus.

Land use is often controversial. Citizens may disagree with the Commission's recommendations at times. The Commission members also may disagree at times, which contributes to a healthy discussion. But although a fair process does not always result in unanimity, a thorough and transparent vetting process, including a clear explanation, usually helps citizens understand the reasons for the recommendation. Absent a meaningful public hearing process, the Commission's recommendations would be more difficult, and of less validity. A fair public hearing process also helps minimize conflict and reassures citizens that their input is welcome. Even if they may disagree with the result, if the citizens had a fair hearing, that is appreciated. By maintaining these high standards, the Commission's public hearing process contributes to the high quality of life in Fairfax County.



“The strengths landscape architecture draws from its garden design heritage include: the Vitruvian design tradition of balancing utility, firmness and beauty; use of the word 'landscape' to mean 'a good place' - as the objective of the design process; a comprehensive approach to open space planning involving city parks, greenways and nature outside towns; a planning theory about the contextualization of development projects; the principle that development plans should be adapted to their landscape context.” - **Tom Turner**
