

Park and Recreation Commission Charter **Adopted May 21, 2019**

Introduction: Park and recreation services, public spaces and natural resources make a vital contribution to the personal health and wellbeing of people, to the economic wellbeing of the community, to environmental quality and sustainability and improve the quality of family and community life. The mission of the Arlington Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is to provide healthy and fun recreation, sport, and leisure choices and cultivate, maintain, enhance and protect natural, and environmental resources. It is the policy of Arlington County to provide high-quality park and recreational services and facilities in a manner that assures their equitable distribution and availability, and in a manner that facilitates coordinated planning and programming based on citizen input and participation. The maintenance, acquisition, enhancement and programming of County park, recreation, and natural and public space resources benefit from the thoughtful review and oversight from the citizens whose lives and neighborhoods are touched by such resources. The involvement of interested and knowledgeable citizen representatives is of great importance in assessing, evaluating and meeting community park, recreation and public space needs and desires.

Mission: The Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) shall be advisory to the County Board, and in that capacity may make studies, develop recommendations, conduct public meetings and educational programs, hold hearings, prepare reports, and appear before public bodies in furthering the objectives stated above.

Governing Documents: Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP), Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP), Urban Forest Master Plan, park master plans, area, sector and other plans as they relate to open space.

Function and Scope: The Commission's primary responsibilities shall be to provide the Board with advice and recommendations concerning park and recreation planning, programming, and budgetary matters, natural resource enhancement and protection and enhancement of public spaces. The Commission shall also administer the Bill Thomas Park Volunteer Award, and make recommendations concerning parks and facilities naming, as well as other major park recognition awards.

The scope of PRC responsibilities includes:

1. Review and revision of the Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP). The PSMP is a required and standing element of the County's overall comprehensive plan. The Commission will monitor the implementation of PSMP elements annually, and review the PSMP every five years. The Commission shall serve as the lead in the five-year reviews and ten-year updates of the PSMP, in cooperation with other commissions as appropriate.
2. Hold public meetings, hearings, review, analyze, and make recommendations with respect to all park master plans and issue formal findings on proposed plans.

3. Review, analyze, and make recommendations with respect to area and sector plans that have implications for public space, park and recreation resources as well as other private developments. A representative from the Commission should be represented in planning activities that might impact parks and public spaces. These include the Site Plan Review Committee and the Public Facilities Review Committee.
4. Review, analyze and comment on the annual DPR operating budget and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.
5. Review, and make recommendations concerning the overall distribution and adequacy of park and recreation facilities and opportunities for all County citizens. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring adequate programs and facilities to serve people within the County having special or unmet needs.
6. Study and make recommendations with respect to coordination, efficiency, and quality of park and recreation facilities, programs and services serving the County, including rules and practices for their safe conduct.
7. Make recommendations on innovative programs, changes in existing parks and recreation programs and activities to better serve the public.
8. Make recommendations with respect to improved cooperation among public and private agencies, and improved utilization of publicly owned or operated buildings, public space and other facilities in the interest of more effective collaboration, including with the County's school system.
9. Make recommendations with respect to more effective integrated planning and programming with other public services, including family and social services, drug abuse, pre-delinquency programs, transportation, housing, zoning and land use, and environmental improvements.
10. Coordination and liaison with other Commissions directly related to the DPR (e.g. Sports and Urban Forestry Commissions) and with other commissions in the County whose areas of jurisdiction, authority and interest touch on or relate to the park, recreation, and natural and public space matters, such as the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, , Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2), Urban Forestry Commission, Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB), Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Pedestrian Advisory Commission, Bicycle Advisory Commission, Commission on the Arts, and the Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission (FAAC).
11. Coordination and liaison with other organizations and groups such as the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT), and other Federal, local, state and regional groups, both public and private (e.g. EcoAction Arlington, Friends of Arlington Parks, Arlington Regional Master Naturalists, Tree Stewards of

Arlington and Alexandria, Arlington County Civic Federation, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service).

12. Carry on such additional projects and activities as the Commission may from time to time undertake or the Board direct, consistent with the overall objectives of the Commission.

Membership: The Park and Recreation Commission shall be composed of 15 persons, representing a diverse mix of individuals with a range of expertise related to the PRC mission, as well as representing a geographic and demographic mix of citizens.

Members will be appointed for two-year terms, and with reappointment, shall be permitted to serve no more than six (6) consecutive years, unless the Board deems otherwise. All members serve at the pleasure of the Board. The Commission may appoint additional members, ex-officio, to the Commission to represent other commissions (e.g. Sports, Urban Forestry, Neighborhood Conservation) and county government (e.g. Arlington Schools) that have an interest in park, recreation, natural resources, and related matters. Such members shall have no vote.

Financial Disclosure: Members of the Park and Recreation Commission shall be required to fill out a Virginia Financial Disclosure Statement form once a year.

Chair, Vice Chair: The County Board shall designate a Chair to lead the PRC with the chairperson to be appointed annually by the Board. An additional member may be designated by the County Board to serve as Vice Chair when the Chair is unavailable.

Committee Membership: The Commission may create standing and ad hoc committees as needed to successfully carry out these responsibilities.

Staff Liaison: The County Manager shall appoint a member of the staff from DPR to serve as liaison to the PRC.

Meetings: The PRC will meet as needed to adequately fulfill its role and responsibilities outlined in this charter.

All meetings will comply with Virginia Open Meeting requirements and the Freedom of Information Act. Agendas and meeting minutes will be made available to the public in a timely manner. The Advisory Group Handbook provides additional information on the conduct of meetings as well as communication protocols that should guide all members in their advisory group work.

Reporting to the Board: The PRC will provide recommendations to the County Board about policy, planning, programming and budgetary matters related to parks, recreation and natural resources. In addition, the PRC will provide recommendations with respect to parks and facilities naming, including benches and other recognition features, and major park recognition awards. The PRC will at a minimum submit an annual report to the County Board after consultation with the Board Liaison. The PRC may, from time to time, be asked to provide comment at a regular Board meeting or Board work session.

Update of this Charter: From time to time, the PRC shall review this charter to assure that it meets current needs. Any requests for changes must be processed through the Board Liaison.