

APPROVED 04/16/2024 Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Time: 5:00 - 6:30 pm in-person and via Lifesize

Attendance: Bill Steigelmann, Lexi Sassi, Anir Bhat, Kristin King, Bill Spare, Gene Fleeman, Cindy Unangst, Jamie Moore, Kevin Stottlemeyer, Pam McDonald, Sean O'Keefe

Meeting minutes:

1. March meeting minutes approved.
2. Data center update – Bill Steigelmann. Bill discussed the county's plans to approve new data centers in the county and the need for some regulations to be in place to address the energy costs and needs of the centers.
3. Bird City designation – Middletown is officially the first town to receive the designation in Frederick County! The town board signed a resolution. Contest for signature town bird is in process with reveal to happen on May 18th at the Green Talk. The schools have been invited to participate and vote in the next couple of weeks. Gene will set up a way for adults to vote online for a town bird— a link where residents can email their votes with their address. Jim Roessler and Anir Bhat will lead a bird walk that morning and will decide on location: Cone Branch Trail, Wiles Branch Trail or Middletown Park. Anir reported that Middletown is one of the few communities where Chimney Swifts breed because of the historic homes with brick chimneys that are not capped.
4. Green Lecture series with library – first one will be May 18th with a talk by Deb Portney about birds and World Migratory Bird Day; Green Talks will be held the third Saturday of the month at 1:00pm. Deb put together a list of books to be featured in May at the library related to birds and birding. Before Waneta retired, she created a flyer of the talks for the year.
5. Green Expo – Saturday, April 20th at Memorial Park; set up beginning at 9am; lots of past participants were unable to attend this year, but we do have a few new ones. There may be some high school students available to volunteer. Cindy will do a tree planting demo at Memorial Park near the pollinator garden. Raffle: One compost bin; free trees-pin oak, river birch, and sweet bay magnolia. Becky Myers will volunteer focusing on using biodegradable compost bags to collect compost and bring to the town compost collection site. The town will giveaway starter composter kits—10 bags each with a stand. Cindy reviewed setup and vendors that will be present. The town has a computer program that tracks town staff needs and to dos for any town event. Cindy has one in place for the Green Expo and will make sure it is up to date. Cindy shared how she chooses date for the event at the end of year—in coordination with school calendar (not spring break week) and near Earth Day. Cindy will do Earth Day proclamation and welcoming statement at the expo this year, as it is her last year.
6. Outreach sub-committee report – Signage was completed for the Green Expo and other events; banner has been designed and printed at Mountain Postal; business cards printed that include our QR code for the website.
7. Pollinator demonstration gardens – Memorial Park garden maintenance volunteer sign-up; Village of Foxfield eyebrow and circle planting – plants look great; thistle is still an issue at the circle, the liriopie on the eyebrow was removed and we need to determine planting for that area; wildflower seeds were sown on the slope of the trail west of North Pointe Terrace.
8. Compost project – one more compost bin is available for purchase at municipal center; we will raffle one off at this year's Green Expo. Community compost bin is still getting great use—collection weight was down in March at 683 pounds.

9. Tree plantings – tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (see below); Healthy Forests, Healthy Waters tree planting was done last month – 1,175 tree seedlings off Layla Drive; Arbor Day tree planting will be Friday, April 26th at Remsberg Park where we will plant 50 trees; we are giving away 51 free trees this year with dogwoods, redbuds, sweetbay magnolias, river birch, pin oaks and serviceberries. Arbor Day tree planting – 1-3pm at Remsberg Park.
10. Chesapeake Bay Trust grant – we were awarded \$2,000 for a plaque and educational materials in relation to the Wye Oak tree planted on East Green Street! Since the tree will not have leafed out in time to take photos of it for educational materials ahead of the Green Expo, we will instead plan to do the plaque unveiling and educational efforts at the July Green Talk which is going to be about tree planting. Kristin and Pam are designing a flyer about the Wye Oak. Will coordinate with StreamLink July Green Talk to present about the Wye Oak. Cindy is looking for an appropriate tree image and/or oak leaf image to add to plaque design.
11. Tree City USA – Both our Tree City and Growth Award applications were approved; only 15% of Tree City municipalities receive the Growth Award.
12. Gift Tree Program – We received an application and payment for a red maple tree to be planted in memory of a dog named Buster; his owner would like the Red Maple tree to be planted at Memorial Park and Cindy has confirmed that there is a location for his tree at the park.
13. Recycling event – Bill Traub and the Knights of Columbus will be collecting metals the day of the Expo in the parking lot behind the MVB. The next recycling event will be Saturday, October 19th after Cindy’s retirement.
14. Trex plastic bag collection – we can still take plastic bags to MES. Also, there are bins behind the Middle School for textiles as a fundraiser through Helpsy.
15. Battery recycling at the Municipal building – we can only take in lithium-ion batteries at this time as funding as run out for the RecycleMyBattery collections that the student-led organizations were doing.
16. Frederick County Sustainability Commission green forum follow-up – a survey was sent to Cindy, Mark and Bill to fill out as a follow-up to the forum. Results will be known on the 17th.
17. Bee City – annual report due at the end of February was submitted on the 21st.
18. May meeting date – third Tuesday – May 21st

GOALS FOR 2024:

PLANT 100 TREES IN 2024 – 60 planted on 3/8					
GIFT TREE PROGRAM - GOAL OF \$1000 – \$600 taken in to date					
QUANTIFY/SHOW PROGRESS ON 25% CANOPY BY 2025					
HOLD GREEN EXPO -					
SUPPORT MES & MMS LOOL PROGRAM - VOLUNTEER SUPPORT -					
PROMOTE & SELL 20 COMPOSTING BINS –					
PROMOTE & SELL 25 RAIN BARRELS (GRANT REQUEST)?					
EVALUATE & RECOMMEND STREETLIGHT BUYBACK PROGRAM TO TOWN BOARD					
CREATE 2 AC POLLINATOR MEADOW NEAR SOLAR ARRAY					

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Dark Sky policy

TREE PLANTING MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

April 9 (Tuesday) 8:30-10:00am – redbud and serviceberry pruning at Remsberg Park done with Bill Spare.

April 15 (Monday) 8:30-10:30am – unloading trees at East Wastewater Treatment Plant—Bill assisted with unloading the free trees and loaded trailer for trees to be picked up on the day of the Green Expo.

April 23 (Tuesday) 8-9:30am – flagging at Remsberg Park for Arbor Day tree planting (50 trees) with Anna Twig of DNR. She offered the town an additional 80 arborvitae trees (1 gal) to be planted around Pickle Ball court area.

April 23 (Tuesday) 9:30-11am – check on FRO trees at Wiles Branch Park

April 30 (Tuesday) 9-10:30am – FRO area at Wiles Branch Park

May 3 (Friday) 9-10:30am - FRO area at Alt 40/Knoll Side Lane