

APPROVED November Middletown Sustainability Team Meeting Minutes

Date and time: Tuesday, November 15, 2022, 05:00 - 6:15 PM Eastern Time

In Attendance: In-person and Virtual: Cindy Unangst, Pam McDonald, Adam Stanzione, Bill Spare, Kristin King, Mark Carney, Kevin Stottlemyer, Ann Payne

Meeting Minutes:

1. October meeting minutes approved.
2. Green Lecture series with library (Ann) – Maryland Birds program October 29th @ 1:00pm – did anyone attend? Pam reported that it was well attended and a very informative talk. The speaker shared a very useful handout that Pam will share with Gene to add to our website. Next program is tomorrow with an Olive Oil tasting: Olive Oil 101 November 16th @ 1:00pm; Holiday Greenery decorating December 17th @ 1:00pm; Karen Whitehair program in March!
3. Outreach sub-committee report – Leave the Leaves and/or pollinator protection yard signs or door-hangars. Ann reported it is too late for this year but is something the outreach committee can consider for next year. Cindy reported that the town is revamping the sign regulations for the town, and we might want to wait to see what they will be. Ann brought up the idea of a seed garden to Waneta. She reported that Lenora Gracken(?), a librarian at the Middletown Library has started a seed library at the library and is working with a master gardener for this project. Waneta was very excited about the Green Team partnership with this: the library will focus their seed library on vegetables and the Green Team could focus on wildflowers. Two master naturalists on our team (Ann and Karen) could monitor seeds on our side. Kevin reported that the town board supports this idea and thought that the seed library could be placed near the pollinator garden. Waneta thought that the seed library should be placed inside the library to maintain seed quality (the current seed library is kept inside).
4. Website updates (Gene) – terms and conditions disclaimer—Commissioner Jennifer Falcinelli thought our website's terms and conditions should be under the town website's.
5. Green Expo – date for next year – Saturday, April 22nd – Earth Day! Cindy has sent out Save-the-Date email to vendors. Cindy said she already has confirmation of many vendors wanting to participate in the event.
6. Bee City USA – need to start working on IPM for next year's submittal. Mark reported he is working on a declaration that states that the town does not use chemicals on landscaping or in parks. The town will need to ensure that its contractors for grounds maintenance comply with this mandate.
7. Mayor's Monarch Pledge – annual report due December 1st!

8. Pollinator demonstration gardens – Cindy discussed the robbery of plants from the Memorial Garden. Cindy would like to focus on Village of Foxfield eyebrow and circle planting for next spring. Edamarie has provided us with a list of plants, and we will need to compare plants needed with North Creek nurseries. Mark reported that it is best to order sooner than later so the plants can be reserved. Cindy will contact Edamarie for more details and finalizing the list of plants. Town will be responsible for care of the garden. Pollinator garden care and watering schedule will be set up again in Sign Up Genius for team members to volunteer.
9. Compost project – compost bins available for purchase at municipal center. Cindy shared report of monthly compost bin usage. Average since inception is 500 lbs./month. Usage is lower as we move into the fall. Highest usage was during the summer.
10. Lunch Out Of Landfills – no update.
11. Tree plantings – The October tree plantings went very well. Ann Twig from DNR provided the tree planting demo. Tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (see below); Ben Fritton tree planting offer still has not been implemented. The team would like to offer the free trees to residents in the spring in coordination with our Arbor Day tree planting event to be held on April 28, 2023. Cindy with help from Bill Spare has continued to inventory survival rates of past tree plantings: Free trees planted by town staff during the pandemic—Cindy inventoried these trees as Remsberg, Wiles Branch, Washington St., pretty good survival rate with some deer rubs on trees in the parks.

SilvoCulture grant for fruit and nut trees: Kevin visited Fox Haven Farm and saw how they have implemented their Silviculture grant. Our grant is still pending, and Kevin learned a lot about their program.
12. Sonya Demiray of the Tree Board reviewed Cindy’s fall tree planting report and let her know that she can help with getting volunteers for tree plantings in the future.
13. Tree City USA – Cindy is working on actions to complete for next year’s Growth Award. Cindy is keeping spreadsheet of all trees we have planted, and maintenance time spent in the town. She discussed adding in bags of mulch and stakes for each tree into the grant application. While it will mean less trees from the grant money, it will ensure better protection for the trees that are planted.
14. Gift Tree Program – flyer boxes at Wiles Branch Park, Memorial Park and on Cone Branch Trail – Pam will refill each box. A new application came in! To honor Jessica Elder—a fringe tree to be added to the Memorial Tree park along the Cone Branch Trail at Linden Blvd.
15. Recycling event – will look to continue program biannually with next event on March 11, 2023. Cindy shared flyer about the Spring recycling event—Ann suggested adding the lithium battery recycling event that the Rotary Club sponsored on November 5 in Middletown. The Redwood Institute would receive the batteries and process them. Rotary expressed interest in participating in our future recycling events, so Cindy will contact them for the April event.

16. No Idle Zone - discussion. Sean has some ideas about this but is not present this evening. Will revisit in December.
17. Green Schools: Cindy attended information session about this and will have more information to come.
18. Buy Back streetlights program: Potomac Edison is willing to convert all of our streetlights to LED without the town having to buy back the lights. This would be a cost savings to the town as if the town did the conversion, there would be a lot of town staff time and the need to purchase special supplies. The team would like to know about the brightness and the spectrum of the lights. Will all the lighting be dark sky compliant? Kevin reported that the lights need to match current lighting in Middletown Glen.
19. FCPS feasibility study—next Thursday vote by the Board of Ed. Meeting for the community is this Thursday, 11/17 at 6 p.m. at the high school. The proposal being considered is to demolish all 3 schools. Co-shared school for elementary and middle and new high school where the elementary school was. There would be a new large loop driveway around the schools that would destroy the pine grove and oldest cottonwood tree (one of the oldest in Maryland). FCPS is fast tracking this or they might lose funding by 11/21. FCPS has not contacted or worked with the community on this at all including the burgess and commissioners. Cindy said this will have to go through the Middletown Planning commission—traffic, setback, landscaping, etc.
20. December meeting date – third Tuesday – December 20th

GOALS FOR 2022:

PLANT 100 TREES IN 2022 – More than 300 were planted!					
GIFT TREE PROGRAM - GOAL OF \$1000 – \$300 realized so far					
QUANTIFY/SHOW PROGRESS ON 25% CANOPY BY 2025					
HOLD GREEN EXPO -					
SUPPORT MES & MMS LOOL PROGRAM - VOLUNTEER SUPPORT -					
PROMOTE & SELL 20 COMPOSTING BINS – 5 sold					
PROMOTE & SELL 25 RAIN BARRELS (GRANT REQUEST)?					
EVALUATE & RECOMMEND STREETLIGHT BUYBACK PROGRAM TO TOWN BOARD					
CREATE 2 AC POLLINATOR MEADOW NEAR SOLAR ARRAY					
EDUCATION ON STORMWATER PERMIT PROGRAMS					

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: