

08 15 23 Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: Tuesday, August 15, 2023, 05:00-6:30 p.m.

Attendance: Cindy Unangst, Gene Fleeman, Kevin Stottlemeyer, Pam McDonald, Lexi Sassi, Kristin King, Ann Payne, Sean O'Keefe

Meeting Minutes:

1. July meeting minutes approved.
2. Green Lecture series with library – Karen Cannon and Barb Trader with Mobilize Frederick on August 12th speaking about climate change preparedness— well attended by Green Team members and public. Jonathan Rose used new software that eliminates background noise to record the talk. September talk on recycling scheduled for the 23rd was cancelled due to the fact that Middletown's Heritage Festival is the same day; October 28 is Karen's talk on Monarch butterflies at 10:30 a.m. There will be no talks scheduled for November and December due to the move to the new library. We will then restart in January.
3. Little Seed Library –Natural Ways to Deal with Pests, Fungus & Disease on July 22nd (no one attended from Green Team); Seed Harvesting and Saving on August 5th; next up: Canning, Preserving & Fermenting on Saturday, August 26th at 10:30 a.m.
4. Outreach sub-committee report –See the minutes from the Outreach Team's meeting on 8/11/23 copied to the end of these minutes. Pam reported on the committee's meeting and discussed action items from the meetings. These included Karen Whitehair to create a one-page handout about sustainable mosquito control that will go in the October water bill to residents and be featured at the Green Team booth at Heritage Day along with demos of several sustainable measures for residents to try. Ann discussed the feasibility of planting in the water retention ponds in Middletown to create natural predators of the mosquitos. Cindy reported that this would need a design, review and retrofit process that will have a budget impact and may take 5-6 years before actuality. Cindy reported that she will create a one-page annual report by the Heritage Festival. Cindy will also follow up with the Heritage Festival chair, Jennifer Ross, to add the Green Team to the vendor list.
5. Pollinator demonstration gardens – Memorial Park garden – proposed list of plants to install this fall in space. Mark did not order the plants because the quantities were too small. Edamarie has offered to procure the plants for us for the September planting. Rattlesnake Master seedlings were removed on 8/12 by Pollinator Committee Green Team volunteers and shared with team members. Village of Foxfield eyebrow and circle planting – being watered three times a week; need to figure out a care schedule; Cindy met with the HOA – although it was a positive meeting, no one has volunteered to help out with care of the eyebrow. Is it possible Boy Scouts could volunteer to help with this? Cindy will check this out.
6. Compost project – Key City Compost—Cindy has noticed the bins are full earlier in the week before pickup. She checked with Key City about cost of 2 bins over the summer months— cost would be \$195/month versus the \$125 we pay now for 1 bin/week. The committee decided that we will continue to monitor the bin situation and wait to decide on adding a second bin at this time. Compost bins for residents available for purchase at municipal center - we only have four left; we will coordinate with Fred. Co. Dept. of Energy & Environment for fall compost bin and rain barrel program—Cindy will check about the truckload sale that

the county is sponsoring. The bins will need to be picked up from Frederick County Recycling Center./?

7. Tree plantings – tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (see below); letter of support sent for SilvoCulture grant request.
8. Tree trails – Jim Roessler is working on text for Cone Branch tree trail and Cindy shared the draft tree trail guide that Jim is writing up for the trail.
9. Tree City USA Growth Award potential projects– Cindy will start recruiting help to work on Growth Award projects. Cindy will send out dates for tree inventory in the fall. Bill Spare and Cindy worked together to add needed stakes to existing trees in town.
10. Gift Tree Program – gift tree application came in for a redbud to be planted this fall; QR code decals have arrived and been placed on brochure holders; Ryan is cutting the plexiglass to place over the decals. Cindy and Mark are deciding on other locations for them to be placed in town.
11. Recycling event – fall event will be held on Saturday, October 21st with a time frame for the event of 9:00 a.m. - 12 p.m.; Bill Traub will be here for metals recycling, Zimmerman for electronics, Yuck old paint will be back with the town to provide pallet for extra paint, if needed. Helpsy for fabrics/textiles recycling.
12. Trex plastic bag collection – continues this fall at MES. We can take plastic bags from Monday-Friday.
13. Battery recycling at the Municipal building – we received the boxes and the response has been overwhelming; first box was filled up within two weeks at 19 pounds and the second filled up within a week later at 11.9 pounds. Cindy shared information about Urbana initiative for Recycle Your Batteries, a student- led effort. If we engage students, we don't have to pay to have the battery boxes shipped. Cindy would like to engage more students—Lexi's daughter has helped so far. Alkaline batteries can have 10-15 batteries in a bag. For lithium batteries, we can use tape over the nodes. Amit Kumar was Cindy's contact in the Urbana, student-led program. Sharon Steger is a biology teacher at the Middletown high school and is a good contact that may be able to help recruit students.
14. Weed control on Town streets and storm drains. Some parts of streetscape are looking very weedy. Glyphosate is the cheapest versus vinegar, salt and dish soap. Cindy suggested a town project to hand remove weeds. The team discussed options including a steam tool that is highly effective but the cost is unknown. Many members of the Green team have had success with highly acidic vinegar.
15. Wildlife Habitat Advisors program – Deb Portney emailed the green team about this program. Cindy sent her information about the Green Team that she wanted for a slide presentation. Ann and Karen are interested in being involved in this program. The team is not sure of the next steps.
16. Frederick County sustainability committee meets tomorrow at 3 p.m.- 5p.m. Mark attended last month. Mark sent survey to all Green Teams to see what they were interested in talking about such as economies of scale for purchasing—one interest Mark has brought up. The meeting on 8/16 will review the draft survey and decide on final questions. Ann asked if all green teams are included including faith-based groups. Cindy is not sure.

17. REED Center class – Supporting the Bees – Saturday, September 2nd at 12pm – building bee hotels and learning how to support the health and well-being of bees and other insects. Pam was interested in attending but learned that is an all-day event and part of a curriculum at the REED Center.
18. Cathy Vessly—with Boonsboro Green Team. Cindy attended at Sustainable Maryland happy hour and networked with Cathy. Cathy would like to attend one of our Green Team meetings in the future.
19. Doug Martin has a living deed to leave his property to the town as a passive town park and a great opportunity for more native gardens. There will be a playground. Garage will be removed to allow for a parking area. Doug has some restrictions on how he would like the house to be used. This is still under discussion.
20. Dave Lillard from Heart of Maryland will be holding a seed gathering project on October 1. Sponsored with the Sierra Club at the South Mountain park.
21. September meeting date – third Tuesday – September 19th

GOALS FOR 2023:

PLANT 100 TREES IN 2023 – 135 planted in April ✓				
GIFT TREE PROGRAM - GOAL OF \$1000 – \$358 paid in April				
QUANTIFY/SHOW PROGRESS ON 25% CANOPY BY 2025				
HOLD GREEN EXPO - ✓				
SUPPORT MES & MMS LOOL PROGRAM - VOLUNTEER SUPPORT -				
PROMOTE & SELL 20 COMPOSTING BINS – 8 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:

- Habitat advisor volunteers
- Dark Sky policy

TREE PLANTING MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

- August 8 (Tuesday) 9:00-10:30am – maple tree pruning at Remsberg Park**
- August 11 (Friday) 10-11:30am – North Pointe pruning and staking**
- August 18 (Friday) 10-11:30am – Cone Branch pocket park pruning**

1. Discussion re mass transit
 - a. Can we advocate?
 - b. Karen's daughter might be willing to speak on behalf of young residents that would benefit.
 - c. Talk with Jerry Donald, Fred County Council. Local and state funding available?
2. Rails-to-trails. Discussed important opportunity to link bike path with wildlife corridors.
 - a. Invite a representative from rails-to-trails to come talk at one of our Sustainability meetings.
 - b. Share Wildlife Corridor report by Karen Russell of the Frederick Climate Change working group.
3. Mosquito initiative follow up. Need to educate the community.
 - a. Can we secure funds for bait traps? We wonder if Mark Carney brought up this issue with the county.
 - b. Ask whether the girls scouts or boys scouts would be interested in going door to door to help residents identify breeding spots for mosquitos in yards (places where even tiny amounts of water collect) and share information on sustainable measures for mosquito eradication.
 - c. Write up a description of various measures homeowners can take to control mosquito reproduction. Include the info page in the water bill. Create a handout with the same text for the booth at the Heritage Festival. (Karen Whitehair volunteered to do the write up)
4. Heritage Festival
 - a. If we are able to have 2 tables, we need an additional tablecloth for the booth (Ann volunteered to order one.)
 - b. Relocate the booth to be farther away from the music in order to facilitate conversation with people who stop by the booth (live music is too loud; drowns the conversation). Perhaps the booth could be between the Town Hall and Zion Lutheran Church?
 - c. Winnow the information/pamphlets that we display in order not to overwhelm those who stop by the booth. Using the overarching heading "Green Begins at Home" focus on:
 - d. Inside the Home:
 - Laundry alternatives (see f and g below)
 - battery recycling boxesOutside the home:
 - Pollinator garden plans for beginners—copies of garden plans from the Maryland Extension for mid-Maryland yards with various conditions from <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/pollinator-gardens>. Also have sample yard sign from Doug Tallamy's Homegrown National Park program and brochure.
 - Mosquito Control (Plan to have: Karen's info sheet, mosquito donuts, and a display of a GAT trap)
 - d. To make the identity of the booth more visible, get banners (either a horizontal one along the top of the booth, or vertical ones for the sides). Pam will research alternatives and prices.
 - e. Kids interactive feature: Seed Shake—stones and milkweed seeds in a bag that is shaken to strip the fluff/coma from the seeds (Pam volunteered to make this)
 - f. Need a give-away—sustainable laundry sheets in unbleached wax paper, including brief instructions for how to use them and how they help the environment.
 - g. Display soap nuts and info sheet as another sustainable option (replacing laundry soap in big plastic containers)

- h. Gene will create QR codes for display at the booth so that interested parties can access more information
- 5. Website—suggestion to organize some of the information under the headings “Sustainable Home” and “Sustainable Yard” (Gene will work on this)