

APPROVED Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes: August 2024

Meeting date: Tuesday, August 20, 2024

Time: 5:00 - 6:15 pm in person and via Lifesize

In attendance: Lexi Sassi, Bill Steigelmann, Kevin Stottlemyer, Cindy Unangst, Bill Spare, Sean O'Keefe, Pam McDonald

Meeting minutes:

1. July meeting minutes approved.
2. Bird City designation – installation of chimney swift tower at Wiles Branch Park. Cindy checked in with Lisa Baird regarding the construction of the chimney swift tower. She said they plan to have it completed by the end of August and the town will construct the cement base. Cindy is waiting to hear about the construction needs for the base.
3. Green Lecture series with library – Stream Link Education and Planting Trees on July 20th from 1-2:30pm which also included a presentation about the town's Wye Oak offspring was not well-attended; hoping for a better turnout on August 17th for the Food Council of Frederick County talk. September Green Talk is about Wildlife Corridors with Karen Russell and Deb Portney. Cindy cannot attend so Bill Steigelmann will coordinate on the day of the talk. The team needs to start to plan for topics for 2025.
4. Outreach sub-committee report –The committee plans to meet in the coming weeks to plan for Heritage Day. The Wye Oak brochure was completed and printed.
5. An offer letter has gone out to the prospective town planner to be hired by the town after Cindy retires. Cindy plans to have him attend our Green Team meeting next month as well as Becky Axilbund and Mike Hunninghake. Cindy is organizing all of the tasks/timing she does for town tree maintenance for the future.
6. Pollinator demonstration gardens – Memorial Park garden maintenance volunteer sign-up; Village of Foxfield eyebrow and circle planting – plants look great; 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 but don't seem to have taken root. Pam noted that at the Memorial Park pollinator garden there is no Butterfly weed or cardinal flower in the garden this year.
7. Compost project – Community compost bin is still getting good use.
8. Tree plantings – tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (see below);
9. 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! Brochure was printed, but plaque will not arrive until sometime in August. Presentation about the Wye Oak tree took place at the library on July 20th. Once we know when the plaque is to arrive, we'll get notice out to the public for an unveiling. Cindy reported that the report is due next week and expressed concern about the lateness of the plaque delivery.

10. Taylor from SilvoCulture contacted Cindy about another grant opportunity with them. This time the funding will come from a different source than the last grant proposal and Silvoculture is optimistic about funding.
11. Heritage Festival: Green Team booth: Cindy has a sign up for the Heritage Festival which will be on Saturday, September 28. The outreach team has been discussing theme for this year. We will feature the Wye Oak and a way to engage residents to nominate big tree heroes.
12. Middletown Health and Wellness Expo has been scheduled for next year on Saturday, March 8. Need to sign up by September 20. Pam will follow up with the Outreach Team to assess participation.
13. Tree trails – Jim Roessler completed text for Cone Branch tree trail. He would like the Green Team to purchase tree tags for the trees on the Cone Branch trail. Cindy would like the Outreach or Tree subcommittees to look into pricing and options. New trees to add to Wiles Branch tree trail – white ash and black willow. Cindy is looking for volunteers to move the tree trail projects forward. Story map for Wiles Branch Tree Trail is on the town website, however, the QR codes on the tree trail signs goes to the Middletown home page but not the trail site. Cindy also noted that a number of the tree tags and signs are missing on the tree trail. Cindy also noted that the areas around the trees on the trail need maintenance.
14. Tree City USA – Both our Tree City and Growth Award applications were approved; only 15% of Tree City municipalities receive the Growth Award.
15. Gift Tree Program – Cindy talked to a woman who plans to have a tree planted for each of her four grandchildren this fall. Cindy shared about the Gift Tree procedures. Stadler's has established a price sheet for the trees, planting, and warranty. The plaque is about \$65 and Jen Rhinaman can order the plaque. Middletown staff installs the plaque at the tree site when it arrives.
16. Recycling event – The next recycling event will be Saturday, October 19th after Cindy's retirement. Cindy will assist the next planner with advertising and contacting the recycling companies.
17. 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.
18. Battery recycling at the Municipal building – we can only take in lithium-ion batteries at this time. Will have a collection box at the next recycling event in town.
19. Green Schools – Karen is working with Nick Sizemore and Sharon Steger, and Cindy attended the last meeting held on June 6th. Karen has contacted the school this fall with a welcome back email and will follow up.
20. Bee City – Pollinator Week was June 17-21st; Burgess Miller read a proclamation at the June workshop. The town's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program has been on the back burner for the last few years—something we still need to implement. Also, we need to implement a dark skies policy (as this is in the town comprehensive plan.)
21. Data Centers in Frederick County: Bill Steigelmann reported on his advocacy to increase regulation of the proposed data centers in Adamstown. These data centers use enormous amounts of electricity. They also need to have backup generators that currently make tremendous noise if needed to be used in a power outage. New transmission lines are needed to be built and have imminent domain. This will run through eastern Frederick. County,

Howard County and Baltimore county in to Pa. Green house gases will increase dramatically. And the costs of the new transmission lines will be passed onto the consumers.

22. Next meeting date – third Tuesday – September 17th; we are hoping that Mike Hunninghake and Becky Axilbund will be able to attend.

GOALS FOR 2024:

PLANT 100 TREES IN 2024 – 60 planted on 3/8; 75 planted on 4.26; ✓				
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				
EDUCATION ON STORMWATER PERMIT PROGRAMS				

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Dark Sky policy

TREE PLANTING MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE