

Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes
Date and Time: Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 05:00-6:15 p.m.

Attendance: Cindy Unangst, Gene Fleeman, Ann Payne, Bill Steigleman, Bill Spare, Sean O’Keefe

Meeting discussion items:

1. September meeting minutes approved.
2. Green Lecture series with library – Edamarie spoke about native plant gardening in late September that was well attended; Gene will cut the activity portion from the recorded tape; October talk is scheduled for Saturday the 28th at 10:30am with Karen Whitehair talking about monarch butterflies; Karen’s talk does not yet have a flyer, but Cindy will check on its availability; there will be no talks scheduled for November and December due to the move to the new library; we will need to start brainstorming speakers for the new library; Sam Droege, the bee expert, was suggested.

Gene would like three recorders at our events: one for capturing audio, and two standard phones, one for a wide shot and the other for closeups. The videos are posted on our YouTube channel and linked to our website.
3. Outreach sub-committee report – lots of interest in mosquito control and sustainable-minded laundry detergent products at the Heritage Festival; kudos to the Outreach committee for all their planning! Our table was successful despite the weather.
4. Pollinator demonstration gardens – Memorial Park garden – proposed list of plants to install this fall in space previously filled up with Rattlesnake Master seedlings; Pam was to reach out to Edamarie about additional plants; Village of Foxfield eyebrow and circle planting – Cindy plans to meet with one of Edamarie’s employees to go look at the spring plantings, and then schedule one more weeding session this fall; Mark (Backyard Bounty) will consult about weed/plant questions and share advice on the eyebrow.
5. Compost project – two more compost bins available for purchase at municipal center – one was raffled off at the Heritage Festival and we have one for next year’s Green Expo. The Lunch out of Landfills teacher at MMS has retired and the program is not being done. There is no longer recycling at the school as well.
6. Tree plantings – tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (see below); letter of support sent for SilvoCulture grant request; the cottonwood tree that was to be saved on the Foxfield Section 6 property will now be cut down per directions from the Frederick County Soil Conservation Service; close to 3,000 trees seedlings will be planted on that site, and PC Chairman Carney has asked for a Heritage tree to be planted as well. Anna Twig put together a plan for 2.71 acres that will be totally state-funded including planting and upkeep for 3 years on the property off Layla Drive and Hollow Road. The state will provide 1,175 trees – white oak, red oak, persimmons, plums and more. Oaks and sweetgums are doing well on that and other sites. Solar panels should be compatible on the same site. Gene mentioned that the link measuring solar productivity for the town’s solar array is not currently working. McClintock Distillery is looking for a place to plant their 60 container Gift of Trees/Gimlets for Green Month campaign trees. Wiles Branch and Remsberg Park were suggested as possible locations. One of the ten redbuds on Foxfield Pass has died and a resident has requested a replacement.
7. Tree trails – Jim Roessler is working on text for Cone Branch tree trail. New trees to add to Wiles Branch tree trail – white ash and black willow.
8. Tree City USA Growth Award potential projects– Cindy will start recruiting help to work on Growth Award projects. She has compiled a recording form to revisit each town property to inventory the trees on town-

owned land. Bill Spare and Cindy are completing their inventories of trees planted within the past few years. There has been some damage done due to deer rub. We need to soon inventory the hundreds of trees planted in the County Park, plus the acre at Catocin Creek.

9. Gift Tree Program – late spring application came in for a redbud to be planted this fall which will be installed soon - location is tree grove off Linden Boulevard; QR code decals have arrived, and Mark has them placed.

A crabapple trees in one of the planters on Main Street that died will be replaced by a crape myrtle.

10. Recycling event – fall event will be held on Saturday, October 21st with a time frame for the event of 9am – Noon (last spring was 8-11am); the paint can, and electronics locations will be swapped to minimize congestion; Cindy has reached out to high school teachers to alert students of the need for help at the event. The Bellringers event is happening the same day, and they might use the Willow Street pocket park this year since they cannot use the town parking lot due to the recycling event.
11. Trex plastic bag collection – we can still take plastic bags to MES; one committee member indicated it would be helpful to have an earlier heads-up about whether a pickup is needed and how large the pickup is.
12. Battery recycling at the Municipal building – we have filled up three boxes so far, and need to recruit students to help with the battery collection boxes and promotion; one high school student has volunteered so far.
13. Weed control on Town streets and storm drains – Cindy pulled weeds along West Main Street last month, and we had volunteers from United Way pull weeds along West Green Street on October 6th. We need to delve more deeply into IPM and put out a fact sheet.
14. Wildlife Habitat Advisors program – Karen is interested in being involved in this program.
15. Frederick County Sustainability Commission meeting – there is a forum planned for February but is a loose plan.
16. Data centers (DCs) - Bill Steigelmann reports that two medium sized DCs already exist near Urbana. DCs like to build close together. AI is beginning to eat up lots of computing power, threatening sustainability with huge electricity use. One DC will use the same amount of power as FredCo uses. Greenhouse gas emissions are a serious concern as the load increases. We do not produce the power ourselves. The DCs have backup generators for when power is not available. Four supersized centers are being proposed with 42 giant diesel-powered megawatt burning backups. DCs alternate monthly testing, producing soot, etc. They make a lot of noise and soundproofing is not planned currently. Two thousand of these generators would run at full power in the event of a power outage. Noise pollution is not regulated during an emergency. It could deafen children. Current regulations are weak. Large amounts of explosive fuel will be stored on site. Rainwater will run off the massive roofs, a possible flood hazard. Tax revenue from the centers is desired to improve schools, etc. Bill urges stronger regulations. Bill was asked to send more info to our GT mailing list.
17. Water conservation, drought, and development discussion - (Ann) Middletown is periodically short of water for existing residential needs. Frederick County is currently absorbing the most new residents in MD. We continue to permit developments in our watershed. Given that an average household uses over 300 gallons of water per day and given that our groundwater sources cannot produce more water to meet the growing demand, it seems prudent for us to consider strategies to efficiently reuse the water that we residents draw into our homes. Enabling residential greywater use is one way to be more efficient with the water we use. For example, plumbing can enable water drawn from the family showers to be reused to flush toilets. Or water from sinks, washing machines, etc. can be reused to water landscapes. Filters are available to ensure reused water safety. Our comp strategic plan goal is to assure that water can be reused and recycled as

appropriate. In 2018 Hogan proposed and legislation was passed to encourage greywater in MD. The state's large committee tasked with designing regulations met from 2018 until COVID but did not resume. Frederick County has regulations that make reusing residential water difficult, if not impossible. Ann suggests we investigate ways to simplify reusing residential water and consider mandating the installation of greywater stubs in all new developments/ housing. Places where water has already become scarce, such as Tucson and Phoenix, mandate greywater in all new construction and even award cash incentives for greywater installation in existing residences. Ann suggests not waiting to run out of water to be proactive in conserving it. EPA info.

18. There will be no meeting in November since it would just be two days before Thanksgiving. December meeting date – third Tuesday – December 19th at 5:00pm.

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

- October 10 (Tuesday) 9-10:30am - inventory of trees off Layla Drive and tree tube installation**
- October 17 (Tuesday) 9-10:30am – check on tree-of-heaven along Foxfield walking trail and do tree inventory of Fall 2022 trees planted along trail**
- October 20 (Friday) 9-10:30am – more tree inventory and tree tube installation**
- October 27 (Friday) 9-10:30am – tree inventory at Cone Branch pocket park**
- October 31 (Tuesday) 9-10:30am – prune black gum trees at Remsberg Park**
- November 3 (Friday) 9-10:30am – prune oaks at Remsberg Park**