

January 23, 2024 Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Time: 05:00 - 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance: Cindy Unangst, Pam McDonald, Kevin Stottlemeyer, Deb Portney, John Lane, Gene Fleeman, Mark Carney, Ann Payne, Lexi Sassi, Sean O'Keefe, Waneta Gagne

Meeting minutes:

1. December meeting minutes approved.
2. Bird City designation: Middletown wants to apply for the Bird City designation. Cindy has begun the application process. Must do 10 actions from Maryland Bird City website: Cindy discussed the following ten: 1) world migratory bird day (can be tied into another event like our Green Expo), 2) Tree city and 3) Bee city USA statuses count, 4) mobilize support, 5) town has riparian setbacks, 6) town is addressing light pollution, 7) increase awareness (Green expo, website postings, Social media), 8) ensure access to nature, 9) reduce energy use, 10) improve infrastructure. The town can easily meeting these 10 requirements. Deb Portney would be a member as a member of the Frederick City Bird Club. Other residents can be members of the committee as they are interested. Mark discussed the possibility of us doing an additional 10 items to be a "high flyer" as the first 10 are in process or already being done. Gene asked about whether Bird City expects us to have a separate web site that we would have to pay for. Cindy reported no, we can link our web site to their directory. Membership is \$200/ every 2 years. Cindy will put together a memo for town board for approval.
3. Green Lecture series with library – discuss potential topics for 2024 Green Talks. Waneta joined the meeting and discussed keeping the Green Lectures on Saturdays—the team agreed. We will not have a Green talk in April, since we have the Green Expo. Ann proposed a list of topics for the year. Waneta is unsure the library will be open for a March Green Talk. We will target a big kickoff in May with the Bird City talk at the new library. Here are the topics proposed for the year:
 - May 2024 - Bird City - Deb Portney
 - June 2024 - Green Schools - Laurie Jenkins - OR CAREY MURPHY
 - July 2024 - Frederick County Office of Agriculture - presenter to speak about mission (increase food production; carbon sequestration)
 - August 2024 - Food Security Network from Hood College - presenter tba OR FREDCO FOOD COUNCIL'S, JOANNE COATES-HUNTER (OF FOX HAVEN FARM) FOOD RESILIENCE FOCUS
 - September 2024- Wildlife Habitat Advisors Program - presenter tba KAREN RUSSELL WROTE THE WHITE PAPER ON WILDLIFE CORRIDORS SO ANIMALS CAN MOVE AS THE CLIMATE CHANGES. (ccwgfredco@gmail.com)
 - October 2024 - Maryland Native Plant Society (regarding tree cutting) presenter tba
 - November 2024 - Tri-State Astronomers "Star Party" (re: light pollution) presenter and PLACE tba
 - December 2024 - Bees and Beekeeping - Sam Droege
 - January 2025 - Stream Link - Tree Planting speaker tba
 - February 2025 - Mobilize Frederick speaker and topic tba
4. Outreach sub-committee report – preparation for Wellness Expo; thoughts going forward for 2024 Green Expo and more: Saturday, April 20 for Green Expo—Cindy will confirm. Thoughts on public education campaign, especially regarding citizen education on trees, outreach and social media—the outreach committee will work on materials for the Wellness Expo that can be put on website and used for other outreach.
5. Pollinator demonstration gardens – Memorial Park garden maintenance volunteer sign-up—Ann will update the online sign up for the year and email it to the team; Village of Foxfield eyebrow and circle planting –

plants look great; thistle is still an issue at the circle, and Cindy will talk to the Public Works crew about removing the liriopie on the eyebrow this spring.

6. Mayor's Monarch Pledge – report was due December 1st and approved on November 15th.
7. Compost project – two more compost bins available for purchase at municipal center; we have one for this year's Green Expo. Community compost bin is still getting great use—484 lbs in December. For the year, we have gathered 7,839 lbs of compost, an increase of over 2,000 lbs from last year! Key City Compost picks up on Thursday. Gene reports that the bins have not been overfilled, so it is still too early to have a second bin.
8. Tree plantings – tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (see below); letter of support sent for SilvoCulture grant request; Healthy Forests, Healthy Waters tree planting will take place this spring; McClintock Distillery employees will be planting 60+ trees at Remsberg Park on March 8- they will do this project and planting on their own. Potomac Edison will partner with us for the tree program again this year. Cindy is looking at Remsberg park for tree planting this year on Arbor Day. The town is looking at annexing Remsberg into the town limits. Fifty trees will be available for residents again this year through the Potomac Edison program. Cindy will get the grant application out to Potomac Edison.
9. 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.
10. Tree City USA Growth Award potential projects– Cindy started inventorying the trees on town-owned properties last fall with Memorial Park and the North Pointe tot lot being completed.
11. Gift Tree Program – Adam Stanzione might be submitting an application, and there is potential for another application being submitted.
12. Chesapeake Bay Trust grant program: \$2,000 grant for plaque and recognition for our Wye Oak tree on West Green Street. We can also use some of the grant money for education materials about trees—Cindy will look at details and asked if the Outreach committee could help create the materials.
13. Recycling event – next event is March 9. Cindy shared map for layout of flow of traffic to drop off recycling. Will be offering drop off of batteries, textiles, paint, electronics, and metals. The event will run from 9 a.m.- 12 p.m. again.
14. Trex plastic bag collection – we can still take plastic bags to MES.
15. Battery recycling at the Municipal building – we have one high school student helping out that is very committed! Rory has been volunteering from the high school and is recruiting more volunteers. Recycling weights: 35 lbs so far this year. Rory would like to have a drop off box at the high school and this would be approved if the box will be well monitored.
16. Solar panel study for property adjacent to water tank off Layla has been approved. This is also the future location of trees from the Healthy Forests, Healthy Waters tree initiative that Anna Twigg will be planning at this site.
17. Water conservation and resiliency plans for major town users (Mark is also member of water and sewer committee). Committee is thinking of adding an orange designation before red resulting in a 4th level of conservation: Blue, yellow, orange and red.
18. Wildlife Habitat Advisors program – Deb Portney presented a Wildlife Habitat Advisor presentation. Trained volunteers will work with residents to help them discuss priorities, goals and gardening for wildlife. Volunteers walk the property with the owner (1-2 hours) and discuss guidelines. Eight guidelines: 1) plant natives, 2) provide structure/cues to care, 3) provide food for wildlife, 4) provide shelter and housing for

wildlife, 5) Use your water, 6) Eliminate herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers—they devastate the food web; 7) Provide safety and safe haven; 8) Spread the word! Build a network of habitat! Use Doug Tallamy’s website: homegrownnationalpark.org to register your yard. Volunteers provide a written report to the homeowner with recommendations and resources. Deb has done 11 visits. Karen Whitehair is also trained and 3 more volunteers will be trained this spring. Gene has put a page on this on our webpage. Interested residents in becoming a Wildlife habitat advisor can contact Deb for information on the trainings. Many advisors are also master naturalists.

19. Frederick County Sustainability Commission meeting – Cindy listened in to last meeting. There will be municipal green team forum set for Wednesday, February 21, 5-7 p.m. An in-person event at Ballenger Creek Community park (there is building there). No more information is available at this time.
20. Bee City – annual report is due in February. Cindy is working on it and getting input from Mark.
21. Middletown Health and Wellness Expo – March 2 from 10am – 2pm at the Middletown Firehall Activities Center. The Green Team will have a booth at this event and the outreach committee is coordinating the activities.
22. 2024 Mobilize Frederick Climate Summit will be on Friday and Saturday, Feb 2 and 3 at Hood College. Free admission.
- 23.
24. Lunch out of Landfills at Middletown schools? Elementary school and high school have interest and Joe Richardson says there is funding for Middletown. Karen Whitehair’s daughter is interested in volunteering at the high school. Carrie reported she has headed the initiative at MES for the past two years. She was unable to continue this year due to schedule change. Karen is working to help Middletown schools become Green Schools.
25. Gene wondered if Middletown has considered a plastic bag ban not that Frederick City has one in effect. Cindy reported that it is likely the county will pass one soon and Middletown will follow that.
26. February meeting date – third Tuesday – February 20th

GOALS FOR 2024:

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:

➤ Dark Sky policy

TREE PLANTING MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

February 6 (Tuesday) 12:30-2pm – FRO area at Wiles Branch Park

February 9 (Friday) 10-11:30am – FRO area at Wiles Branch Park

February 23 (Friday) 10-11:30am – FRO area at Wiles Branch Park