

## July 2023 Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, July 18, 2023

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Eastern Time

Attendance: In-person and via Lifesize: Cindy Unangst, Lexi Sassi, Mark Carney, Kristin King, Ann Payne, Pam McDonald, Gene Fleeman

Meeting minutes:

1. June meeting minutes approved.
2. Green Lecture series with library – REED Center food forest tour had an attendance of about 10-12 folks—Kristin and Cindy attended. Ben spoke at length and was very informative; Reducing Mosquito Populations with Paul Leisnham on July 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm—Karen, Cindy, Ann and Kevin attended from the Green Team. It was advertised in the Frederick News Post under events and with a small press release. Cindy recorded the event on her iPad and needs to figure out how to share that to BaseCamp and see if it is of quality enough for Gene to edit and share. Cindy will also share her recording of the Green Talk about the Five Million Tree initiative.
3. Mosquito talk—Ann reported on the talk and the need for a public education component. Would the Green Team want to take on the initiative in Middletown? Mark commented that this would be a good project for the county to consider. There are GAT traps that are very effective that cost \$70 per household and would need to be monitored by the resident—targets tiger mosquitos that like very small bodies of water. The effectiveness would depend on the number of households that participate. The team also discussed adding more vegetation to the existing water retention ponds in Middletown to bring in more predators for the mosquitos. The mosquitos in the retention ponds are active in the morning and night and could be controlled with adding predator habitat. Could this be a project for the Boy or Girl Scouts—a citizen science project to help monitor effectiveness.

Upcoming Green Talks: August and September. October Green Talk on milkweed—Ann is looking for speaker for this—Karen Whitehair has volunteered.

4. Little Seed Library –Tomato Expert speaking on June 24<sup>th</sup> (did anyone attend?); next up: Natural Ways to Deal with Pests, Fungus & Disease on July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2pm.—Pam plans to attend.
5. Outreach sub-committee report – the committee will meet later in the season to work on preparing for the Heritage Festival, discuss a marketing strategy to advertise the battery recycling program, and to discuss a strategy for mosquito education.
6. Pollinator demonstration gardens – Village of Foxfield eyebrow and circle planting – being watered three times a week by the town; need to figure out a care schedule. Cindy met with the HOA – although it was a positive meeting, there has been no follow-up from them. Cindy will need to readdress the group to get a commitment from them.
7. Compost project – compost bins 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. The county will purchase compost bins and rain barrels in bulk and then make them available to towns in the county.

8. Compost collection from Key City compost: May was 410 lbs and June was 1,000 lbs.—that is 300 lbs more than last June. The team discussed whether the bin is getting full before pick up. So far, there have not been calls to the town reporting that the bin is full.
9. Tree plantings – tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (see below); Jane Dennison has been in contact with Middletown about Silviculture grant for nut trees. Chesapeake Trust looking for commitment to how the town will sustain the food forest once planted. They would like Middletown to name organizations that will be responsible for caring for the food forest. Cindy also reported that Anna Twig is planning the Healthy Forest, Healthy Waters tree initiative site in Middletown to be located off of Layla Drive.
10. Tree trails – Bethany, forestry board member, joined us to help with tree id on Cone Branch trail; still stumped on exact species of chestnut and hickory. Dr. Roessler reported he will continue to work on the tree trail. New trees to add to Wiles Branch tree trail – white ash and black willow.
11. Tree City USA Growth Award potential projects– Cindy will start recruiting help to work on Growth Award projects. Cindy will be starting a tree inventory of existing trees on public lands in Middletown.
12. 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 will place additional decals at other locations around town.
13. Recycling event – fall event will be held on Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup> with a time frame for the event of 9am - 12 p.m. Cindy reported on some new opportunities/projects for the Green Team to take on: The Crayon Initiative—melt down old crayons and create new ones for hospitals—have a collection box and start at the Green Expo in April 2024. FCPL Green book recommendations—Urbana made a cool flyer with 12 book recommendations—we could do one with our library and have it on the web; and Bikes for the World—collection of old working bikes or ones that need some repairs and the bikes are fixed up and sent to around the world. They have staff/volunteers that help with the collection event.
14. Possible collaboration with Parks and Recreation to have a Middletown bike trail (Mark has created one of about 10 miles around Middletown that he would be happy to share) that the Green Team may co-sponsor and have at our next Green Expo.
15. Trex plastic bag collection – we can still take plastic bags, etc to MES during the summer M - TH, 9-3.
16. Battery recycling at the Municipal building – we received the box and Cindy will work on how to promote the use of it along with the Outreach Committee. Cindy is planning on having one box by the front door near the leaf bags. Every battery must be bagged and sealed. They will not take any leaking batteries—must contact them for proper handling.
17. Saturday, September 2 at 12 p.m. at the REED Center—building bee hotels and learning how to support the health and well being of bees and other insects. Pam would like to attend and learn about this so we could do some of these for our current pollinator gardens.

18. Wildlife Habitat Advisors programs—email from Deb Portney, a Maryland Master Naturalist. Ann Payne has contacted her and let her know that she will help out and that Karen Whitehair was also interested. Deb Portney’s email to the Green team outlined her interest in starting a volunteer program called Wildlife Habitat Advisors. The program is modeled after a similar program administered through Prince Georges County Audubon Society and centers on helping private home and business owners transform their property to a wildlife habitat. She would like to include our Green Team in her slide presentation with a slide about what we are doing to create habitat for native species. She has also developed a model to do a garden visit for home or business owners who request one. The model borrows heavily from Prince Georges County Audubon program where over 275 visits have been performed and 55 volunteer advisors are involved.

19. August meeting date – third Tuesday – August 15<sup>th</sup>

**GOALS FOR 2023:**

PLANT <b>100</b> TREES IN 2023 – 135 planted in April ✓				
GIFT TREE PROGRAM - GOAL OF <b>\$1000</b> – \$358 paid in April				
QUANTIFY/SHOW PROGRESS ON <b>25%</b> CANOPY BY <b>2025</b>				
HOLD GREEN EXPO - ✓				
SUPPORT MES & MMS LOOL PROGRAM - VOLUNTEER SUPPORT -				
PROMOTE & SELL 20 COMPOSTING BINS – <b>8 sold</b>				
PROMOTE & SELL 25 RAIN BARRELS (GRANT REQUEST)?				
EVALUATE & RECOMMEND STREETLIGHT BUYBACK PROGRAM TO TOWN BOARD				
CREATE <b>2 AC</b> POLLINATOR MEADOW NEAR SOLAR ARRAY				
EDUCATION ON STORMWATER PERMIT PROGRAMS				

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Habitat advisor volunteers
- Dark Sky policy

**TREE PLANTING MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

- June 23 (Friday) 10-11:30am– maple tree pruning at Remsberg Park**
- June 30 (Friday) 9-10:30am – Cone Branch pocket park pruning**
- July 7 (Friday) 9-10:30am – North Pointe pruning and staking**