

APPROVED 03 19 2024 Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Time: 5:00 pm - 6:30 p.m. in person and via Lifesize

In Attendance: Cindy Unangst, Kevin Stottlemeyer, Kristin King, Lexi Sassi, Pam McDonald, Agnesanne Danehey, Bill Steigelman, Amanda Stone-Gines, Sean O'Keefe, Bill Spare, Jamie Moore, Gene Fleeman

Meeting minutes:

1. February meeting minutes approved
2. Bird City designation – committee and application. Bird City Committee met Friday, 3/15. Cindy has inputted most of the needed data for the designation. Cindy is waiting on an approved resolution from the Burgess and Commissioners to add to the application. This should be completed next week.
3. Green Lecture series with library – first one will be May 18th with a talk by Deb Portney about birds titled, Bird Migration: The basics of the Atlantic flyway; Green Talks will be held the third Saturday of the month at 1:00 pm. Cindy will ask Jim Roessler if he would like to lead a bird walk that day in the morning, maybe around 8:30 a.m. Lexi will lead the effort to choose a town bird. Collect votes over the month of April. Students can vote in the libraries at their schools. Adults can vote as well—it is to be decided how to implement. Deb Portney will spearhead some of the action items—find out which residents in town have their yards designated Baywise and/or native pollinator gardens.
4. Green Expo – Saturday, April 20th at Memorial Park; we have some new exhibitors that I contacted from the Climate Summit, but we also have a lot of past participants that are unable to attend this year which is concerning. No food truck yet, need live music? A resident (Becky) is volunteering to be at the Green Expo and educate about home composting using biodegradable bags and have some to giveaway. One compost bin is left to be raffled off at Green Expo. The free tree pick up will also be that day and Mark Carney will oversee it and Bill Traube will do metals recycling. The Green team will also have a pollinator table, info table, Julie Kaus will lead an Eco walk at Remsberg Park.
5. Outreach sub-committee report – looking into signage for Green Expo. Cindy will connect Pam with Janet Fox for information about printing signage. Pam agreed to coordinate with Ann Pond at the Middletown Food Bank with design information about their banner. Pam will create a flyer and sign up for Julie Kaus's offering of a Forest Immersion walk to be offered on the afternoon after the Green Expo. Kristin King reviewed feedback and insights from the Green Team's first Wellness Expo. The team felt participating was worthwhile and discussed improved signage, having more takeaways for visitors, and being located in a quieter area for the sit spot/meditation area.
6. Pollinator demonstration gardens – Memorial Park garden maintenance volunteer sign-up; Village of Foxfield eyebrow and circle planting – plants look great; thistle is still an issue at the circle, and Cindy reported that the Public Works crew removed the liriopie on the eyebrow today. Pam will contact Edamarie to see if she has a plan for planting the eyebrow. The team discussed when it was the appropriate time to do spring cleaning and trimming at the gardens.

As long as there is danger of a frost, it is best to leave stems and leaves for protection for insects. This could be an educational component of the pollinator garden at the Green Expo.

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 with 911 pounds for February.
8. Tree plantings – tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (see below); letter of support sent for SilvoCulture grant request – haven't heard anything yet?; Healthy Forests, Healthy Waters tree planting will take place this soon—Corner of Layla and Hollow Road Area: 2.71 acres: 1,175 trees will be planted and maintained for 3 years. Cindy needs help with tree tubes—cut in half and add new holes and will plan to bring them to the next Green Team meeting. McClintock Distillery employees planted 60 trees at Remsberg Park on March 8th; Arbor Day tree planting will be Friday, April 26th from 1-3 p.m. at Remsberg Park where we will plant 50 trees. Potomac Edison employees will volunteer with the tree planting and possibly some Lion's Club members; We are doing the free tree give away again this year as well with dogwoods, redbuds, sweetbay magnolias, river birch, pin oaks and serviceberries. 48 trees have been claimed—60 or more are available.
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! We will plan to do the plaque unveiling on Arbor Day and also need to do an educational effort at the Green Expo. Cindy has text for the plaque and will design it similar to the plaque about the Routzahn Farm near the gazebo. Cindy is gathering bids from photographers to take photos. Pam and Kristin agreed to develop information flyers to educate the public.
10. Tree City USA – State coordinator review has been completed for Tree City and Growth award applications; next is Arbor Day Foundation review. Less than 15% of Tree City's go on to get the growth award and Middletown has succeeded with that!
11. Gift Tree Program – Adam Stanzone might be submitting an application, and there is potential for another application being submitted.
12. Recycling event – despite the rain it was a successful event with even more cars than we had in October. 95 cars in the fall; 121 cars in the spring! There are 3 dumpsters behind the Middletown Middle School that are Helpsy's and residents can deposit textiles there. The Recycle My battery recycling program is over—they are no longer providing free boxes to mail back.
13. Trex plastic bag collection – we can still take plastic bags to MES.
14. Frederick County Sustainability Commission green forum follow-up. Middletown participated but not many other green teams participated. Cindy is waiting for more follow up. County sustainability commission meets 3-5 p.m. on the third Wednesday every month.
15. Bee City – annual report due at the end of February was submitted on the 21st.
16. Middletown Health and Wellness Expo was a great success and Main Street plans for it to be an annual event. Kristin shared feedback and ideas for next year. Jamie had a creative idea of handing out thread matching the year they were born with the color of thread on the Tapestry..
17. April meeting date – third Tuesday – April 16th

GOALS FOR 2024:

PLANT 100 TREES IN 2023 – 60 planted on 3/8				
GIFT TREE PROGRAM - GOAL OF \$1000 –				
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

- March 15 (Friday) 9:00-10:30am – FRO area at Wiles Branch Park**
- March 26 (Tuesday) 9-10:30am – FRO area at Wiles Branch Park**
- March 28 (Thursday)1:30-3pm – FRO area at Alt 40/Knoll Side Lane**