

Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes - Approved

Meeting Date: Tuesday May 21, 2024
5:00-6:30 Town Hall and via Lifesize

Attendance: Cindy Unangst, Pam McDonald, Kevin Stottlemeyer, Kristin King, Jamie Moore, Sean O'Keefe, Bill Steigelmann, Gene Fleeman, Theresa Forsyth, Lexi Sassi (and a new visitor who was also at the Green Talk 5/18/2024 but didn't sign in)

1. April meeting minutes approved

2. Bird City designation

- Contest results for signature bird reveal took place May 18 at Green Talk (Middletown library). Baltimore Oriole was chosen
- Anir Bhat led a bird walk that same morning (8:30am)
- Information sheet about Baltimore Oriole added to Green Middletown Website
- Cindy also added information about "Lord Baltimore" historical origin of the name—minimize perception that Baltimore (the city) is the source of the name.
- There is a Baltimore Oriole nest in a sycamore tree at the edge of Wiles Branch Park athletic field (near creek).
- Over 200 community votes tallied, plus 133 high school students, 233 at primary school, 100 at middle school (672 total). Blue Bird was second runner up after Baltimore Oriole.
- Cindy will add information on the Bird City website.
- South Mountain Outdoor Research Education group offered to build a Swift tower/chimney for Middletown if we have the resources. Lots of excitement about this possibility

3. Green Lecture series with library

- The first one was May 18 -- Deb Portney presented on bird migration and World Migratory Bird Day. Fascinating content.
- About 16 attendees. Good energy and lots of Q&A afterwards. The presentation room in the new library is great for these sorts of events, and library staff were hospitable and helpful.
- Green Talks will be held on the third Saturday of the month at 1:00pm.
- Next talk is June 15: Native and Invasive Plants in our Backyard with Kerry Wixted
- July 20: Stream Link Education and Planting Trees with Kylie Baker
- August 17: Food Systems & Feeding Frederick with Alison Wexler & Sarah McAleavy
- September 21 Wildlife Corridors with Karen Russell & Wildlife Habitat Advisors with Deb Portney. Karen may have a conflict and need to switch calendar around
- October 19: Green Schools with Carey Murphy
- November 16: The Changing Face of Frederick County Agriculture with Katie Stevens

4. Outreach sub-committee report

No recent meetings to report on

5. 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, the liriopé on the eyebrow was removed, need to determine planting for that area; wildflower seeds were sown on the slope of the trail west of North Pointe Terrace.
- Memorial Park garden looks good except that the rattlesnake is aggressive. Trying to pull a lot of it to keep it from crowding out other plants.
- Agnesanne posted some photos of the Foxfield circle. The garden looks healthy and colorful.

6. Compost project

- one more compost bin was available for purchase at municipal center, but has since been sold; Community compost bin is still getting great use.

7. Tree plantings

- tree planting maintenance/inventory schedule (below)
- letter of support sent for SilvoCulture grant request – haven't heard anything yet.
- Healthy Forests, Healthy Waters tree planting was done in March – 1,175 tree seedlings off Layla Drive; Arbor Day tree planting was Friday, April 26th at Remsberg Park where we planted 50 trees plus 21 free arborvitae we received from DNR; we gave away 51 free trees this year.
- Arbor day went well
- Theresa Forsyth has volunteered to donate a Wye Oak to be planted on east side of town
- North side of Frederick got permission for green burial cemetery

8. 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! Since the tree will not have leafed out in time to take photos of it for educational materials ahead of the Green Expo, we will instead plan to do the plaque unveiling and educational efforts at the July Green Talk which is going to be about tree planting.
- For Wye Oak we are reviewing the contract for the photographer
- Looking for a tree symbol for the Wye Oak plaque
- Pam has produced a draft of Wye Oak brochure—we'll add Jamie's photos. Outreach meeting scheduled for 9 AM Tuesday May 28 at Beans and Dreams to work on Wye Oak marketing materials.

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. Cindy will try to revive this effort this summer before she leaves.

10. Tree City USA

- Both our Tree City and Growth Award applications were approved; only 15% of Tree City municipalities receive the Growth Award!
- Tree City material has been shipped

11. Gift Tree Program

- Red maple tree was planted in memory of a dog named Buster at Memorial Park. Sweet memorial with hearts on each side of the plaque

12. Recycling event – The next recycling event will be Saturday, October 19th after Cindy's retirement.

13. 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.

14. Battery recycling at the Municipal building

- we can take in only lithium-ion batteries at this time as funding ran out for the RecycleMyBattery collections that the student-led organizations were working on.

15. Green Schools

- Karen is working with Nick Sizemore and Sharon Steger
- A bit disappointing that the Frederick schools are not engaging more thoroughly with the opportunities.
- Pam met with the group and discussed how to get the schools involved in the green schools movement.
- Green school application is quite lengthy and complex (overwhelming)
- Pam went to a training in Frederick (there are some funds to compensate teachers for getting up to speed, but still a lot of work)
- No designated “green center” in Frederick County for resources, which may explain some of the slow progress

16. Water conservation and resiliency plans for major town users (Mark)

- Kevin reports that the town water and sewer committee came up with additional layers of water conservation

17. Bee City – no report

New document for the website on “Protecting Pollinators at Home”

18. June meeting date – third Tuesday – June 18th

Items from planning commission meeting 5/20/2024:

- Increase the coordination between Planning Commission and Sustainability Committee on such things as dark sky initiatives.
- Greek restaurant coming to town (in old post office building). Joana Tsinonis, owner of Alekos, is moving things forward. May be open by Christmas 2024.
- The old Middletown library, which is owned by Frederick County, will be repurposed as a senior facility for activities. June 11 press conference to inform the public.
- Suggestion was raised to take a break from Green Expo in 2025 during transition to Cindy's replacement. The Expo has not gained the traffic we hoped for, though it generates good will and promotes awareness and innovation regarding sustainability efforts.

Meeting ended early at 6:05

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

- May 17 (Friday) 9:00-10:30am – prune container trees on Main Street
- May 24 (Friday) 9:00-10:30am – check on HFHW plantings
- May 31 (Friday) 9:00-10:30am – check on FRO area at Alt 40/Knoll Side Lane