

Middletown Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was hosted on Zoom and is archived on Basecamp

Date: June 15, 2021

Time: 5:00 - 6:15 p.m.

Participants: Cindy Unangst, Kevin Stottlemyer, Gene Fleeman, Erin Carney, Pam McDonald, Ann Payne, Jessica Elder, Bill Spare, Agnesanne Danehey

Meeting Minutes:

1. May meeting minutes approved with a couple of edits. Pam will resend final version.
2. BASECAMP projects:
 - Pollinator library video: FCPL will put it online and debut it in July and we will be notified. The librarian was very excited about the video! Once FCPL debuts it, Gene will add it to the Green Team YouTube page and website.
 - Bee City USA (Mark): Pollinator demonstration garden update: The first phase of the pollinator garden was planted on June 5. Pam and Ann discussed some ideas and next steps for the garden. Since available pollinator plant species were limited to order for the garden for the June planting, our current garden does not have enough variety of 3-season pollinator plants. Erin reported that her daughter, Quinn, did design a 3-season garden for the site and the team would like to review it. Ann and Pam created a list of other pollinator plants needed to fulfill the mission of a 3-season garden. They discussed budget for redesign and the possibility of adding a second garden in the fall. Ann will share plant list with the team with the goal of ordering needed plants soon for fall delivery and planting. Also suggested-creating garden borders and some type of pathways around existing garden. A maintenance plan needs to be developed and an appropriate watering schedule for town to use. Currently, town gardens are watered 2-3 times/week.
 - Future funding for pollinator gardens: The team discussed possible corporate sponsorship for future pollinator gardens. Ideas to consider: Orchid Cellars, Fordham Distillery. Also, discussed were future pollinator garden sites at Remsberg and Wiles Branch Park.
 - Mayors Monarch Pledge: Common Milkweed discussion—Cindy noted area of common milkweed growing near Remsberg Park and how this can be expanded. The team discussed other appropriate locations for common milkweed in town. Also, we need to understand and educate the town's landscape crew on the correct way to maintain milkweed areas.
 - Monarch habitat advocacy: Erin discussed her ongoing advocacy to keep the rough at the Richland Golf Club natural—they have mowed down acres of milkweed that had been left natural for the last few years. The Landscape Superintendent at the golf course has been resistant to her education and advocacy. Monarchs in the Rough was not helpful as the person Erin spoke to pointed out milkweed is toxic.
 - Green Team Website: Gene mentioned he is developing the monarch web page and is looking for input/review by the team.
 - Green Team at Heritage Festival: Getting residents started with pollinator plants. Would we want to sell native plugs at the festival? Share milkweed seeds at Heritage Festival—use Swamp Milkweed and Butterfly weed seeds as they are less invasive than common milkweed.
3. Middletown Magazine Article: The Green Team (and our Tree City designation) will be the feature “family” for Middletown Magazine’s September issue. Cindy will follow up with Robin Maliszewskyj to schedule interview about Green Team in general. Robin will check out our website. Robin would like to email all members of the team with some questions. A group photo shoot is scheduled for Monday, June 21 at 5 p.m. at Memorial Park near pollinator garden.

4. Mayors Monarch Pledge —Girl Scout Gold Award project: The Girl Scout will come to July meeting. She will be doing a fall Pollinator project with a focus on education with a brochure and blog. She also said she would do fundraising to purchase plants for a second garden. The team would like her efforts to integrate with the pollinator projects already started by the town.
5. Key City Compost for Middletown Resident Use: Erin reported that community compost collection site could be at CrossStone Commons shopping center, however, we would need to be clear with local restaurants that they cannot use the bin (otherwise costs will go up as Key City would need to do collections several times a week). Possibly, local restaurant(s) may want to sponsor a collection site in the future. Key City Compost suggested a location that only residents would use. We would need to educate residents about what could go in the bin. Suggestion to put it near the town offices (behind parking lots) or near Chesterbrook apartments or a Memorial park location?
6. Tree plantings and tree removals: Middletown resident is offering American Chestnut trees that will be planted on town property. Cindy approved the offer and will coordinate. Pam discussed tree removal on residents property as part of the renovation of Broad St. sidewalks and road. She would like to see the sustainability committee active in planning discussions that would impact the tree canopy in the town.
7. Budget: The 2021-2022 budget was approved—Sustainability will receive \$4,000. Gene will submit expenses for the website so the town can take over payment. Gene would continue to be the administrator of the site.
8. Action items for Sustainable Middletown renewal: This will be due in summer 2022. Cindy reported on an action item we will work on: fostering community wildlife habitat—through the National Wildlife Federation designation program. We would need over 100 points for our town. Individual resident’s NWF wildlife habitats can count to the points. Other action items we will work on: Create an insect hotel; historic preservation.
9. Bat Houses: Cindy noted that there are two bat houses on Cone Branch Trail. She is not sure if they are being used by bats. She suggested that team members check out the bat houses at dusk to see if bats are active around the houses.
10. July meeting date: Third Tuesday – July 20^h The team will meet in-person at Memorial Park for this meeting.