

Town of North Beach
Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 6th, 2021
7 PM via Zoom

Attendees: Jane Hagen, Stacy Milor, Guy Stone, Allan Creamer, Lisa Garrett, Jeff Noyes. Guests: John & Elizabeth Real, Sean Mansberger (sp?)

Agenda and discussion: This meeting focused mainly on upcoming North Beach Tree Adoption Program and the NB House & Garden Club native plant sale, and included an in-depth discussion of the Sustainable Maryland recertification.

Town Cleanup Day/Support for Residents

- Guy asked for volunteers to help a few (5 or 6) elderly residents who had brush/material to take to the cleanup day dumpsters. Jeff volunteered to help out. Date for the cleanup day is not yet determined. Guy is working on the list of residents in need.

SH-261 Project

- Jane announced completion of the SH-261 project. Lisa said there was still some work to be done dredging underneath to enable tidal flushing of the wetlands west of the road. EC members will be invited to the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Plastic Straw Flyers

- Jane has printed copies of the flyers. She asked for volunteers to talk to business owners and hand out flyers. Jane: Sweet Sue's, Mexico. Guy: Neptunes, Westlawn. Jeff: Dairy Freeze, Nick's stand. Allan: Jango's Frozen Treats, Cold Penguin. Lisa: The Wheel, Fastop. Jane will drop off flyers to the volunteers. Jane said Prince George's County has outlawed them, but the state has not yet. Thursday's and Hook & Vine have already switched. Sysco carries biodegradable alternatives.

Tree Adoption Program

- Joan Real did a presentation on the NB Tree Adoption Program using a brochure he created and shared with the group. The brochure has pictures of mature trees and gives size, light exposure, soil requirements and other information to help residents choose the best fit for their property. The program makes trees available for free to NB residents through a Keep MD Beautiful grant. One tree per resident, with guidance provided on planting. Total of 40 trees are available, 12 different varieties.
- Trees procured from American Natives in Baltimore: Red Maple, Sugar Maple, Serviceberry, River Birch, Redbud, White Cedar, Sweet Bay Magnolia, Groundsel Bush, Witchhazel, American Linden and Winterberry.
- Residents list their top three choices on the adoption form. Since only 3 or 4 of each variety, the program will do its best to accommodate. There are a number of requirements residents must meet, and rules to follow along with signing a hold-harmless agreement. The trees will be 2-4 feet tall – 1-3 gallons.

- Lisa said this program is part of several conservation projects that comprise the North Beach Green Wave. Earth Day give-away bird & bat houses, bluebird boxes and kits, Green Wave yard signage, and other initiatives will eventually form a Green walking trail through town.

North Beach House & Garden Club Native Plant Sale

- John Real, who is also a member of the NBHGC, also presented the NBHGC Native Plant Sale using a brochure he created (similar to the tree adoption brochure). NBHGC is engaging residents and people outside of incorporated NB to plant native species at home through this sale. These plants are available to anyone, as it is a plant sale not funded by a grant to the town.
- To make ordering accessible for everyone, “packs” of plants will be made up, with guidance on proper environment for each. Large and small packs will be available, for sunny/non sunny, wet/dry etc. environments. Large pack is the small pack plus 3 additional plants. Sale is done through Chesapeake Natives. Flash cards assist resident in ordering which explain which wildlife likes/dislikes each species. Trees are ordered individually. Trees/shrubs being made available are considered North Beach friendly. These include Paw Paws, Sycamore, White Oak, Sweetgum, Bald Cypress.
- The sale is being advertised on NextDoor, as well as Facebook and the town website. The program is getting interest from several nearby towns. Sale and delivery is planned for the first NB Farmers Market, with secondary location at Public Works if the Farmers Market does not go through.
- The team was excited about these programs, which create opportunities to add native trees and shrubs to the town at minimal cost to residents.

Sustainable MD/Green Team Goals

- Jane asked the committee to review the Green Team vision statement and mission statement. Jeff said that the team had reviewed the mission statement recently and liked it as written (in other words, no changes necessary).
- Lisa asked that the team review the goals she drafted for SM that would also be posted on the town website in the SM section. She wants the Green Team to be an umbrella group comprised of the Flood, Tree, & Environmental Committees, as well as the NB House and Garden Club. This umbrella group would meet once or twice a year for Sustainable MD work. This could be done via Zoom. Jane asked Lisa to provide the inclusive list of members to Dawn.
- Lisa discussed how Chesapeake Beach approached creating a community garden resource, and explained the seed swap initiative at Chesapeake’s Bounty and how it can be used to earn SM points.
- The SM program added 14 new actions such as pollinator garden, bike/walk friendly town, how to do a food forest.
- The native plant sale and Earth Day events will contribute towards the goals.
- Lisa said the deadline for the SM submission is June 30, 2021 for the initial draft, with final due at the end of September.
- Allan asked Stacy about getting the updated energy consumption data for the SM submission. She and Joanne are working on different portions of it to provide to

Allan. Allan hopes to get the energy report set up so that it can be updated annually. Lisa reported that several municipalities pay for energy audits instead of relying on volunteers. Allan confirmed that it is a labor intensive effort.

- Lisa said that she'll need help from town staff to get some reports for SM, but in general she is in good shape for sustainable MD. She is currently tied up with Earth Day, the Keep American Beautiful grant, and the RFP for mitigation planting at Overlook Park (related to the state highway raising project)
- Lisa said Dawn wants to update the town website with a new/updated SM action plan; she would like the EC to review the SM Action Plan and recommend which actions to list/display on the website. Jane recommended deleting the completed projects and moving forward with an updated action item list.
- Jeff asked if the recertification for SM is the same process as the original clean-sheet application, or if only project updates are required. Lisa said that once the action items, or innovative programs have been presented to SM via the application process, and the points are awarded, those action items are considered complete and not part of the recertification. For example, the Farmers Market was an innovative project for which NB was awarded a large amount of points. For the recertification, NB can get points for the ongoing action of running the Farmers Market, but won't be awarded a large lump of points for it as an innovative project.
- Lisa said that the 14 new action items SM discussed recently present opportunities for points, but right now NB is at 165 points, but needs over 200 for a recert. She said that once far enough along, the Flood Plan will count towards recertification. Jane asked if the road raising project would count, but Lisa said she didn't know, that most municipalities have their town engineer handle that part of the report.
- Lisa said that a new checklist is expected from the Environmental Finance Center listing all the things that the town has completed. This should make it easier to determine the gap between what is done and what is still to do for a recert. Lisa will check on the status of that.
- On the issue of goals, Jeff expressed concern that seeking other new certifications were listed among the new goals, when simply maintaining the existing SM certification was proving difficult. Lisa said that Tree City, Bird City, Bee City automatically earns points if those certifications are earned. Adding new maintenance-heavy certifications to the list may be too difficult with current resource levels. Lisa said she will be careful to pursue the ones that will earn points without causing too much maintenance overhead.
- Jane asked what we should do with the action items published on the town website. Lisa said that she wanted to make it more interesting for the public, with pictures and information about the activities of the environmental committee and green team, and update it frequently. Jeff recommended taking some of the more interesting efforts related to sustainable MD, those that would be interesting to the public and easily represented with some pictures, and putting those on the website. In other words, don't publish all the action items and activities, just show the ones on the website that would be most interesting to the public.

- Lisa said the Sustainable MD program is being re-hosted, and with that change she anticipates an improved/easier application process. The list she referred to earlier is part of that process.

Meeting adjourned

The next Environmental Committee will be Tuesday, May 4th, 2021.