Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting.

A Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting was held at 125 N Division St, GOB 306, Salisbury, Maryland at 5:30pm on January 8th, 2025.

**Members in attendance:** Charly Sager (Chair), Elise Trelegan, Matthias Pieplak, Ley Rideout, Mike Angelot, Catherine Skeeter, Dave Burt, Noha Yousif.

**Members of the public in attendance:** Christine Maine, Dylan Maine, Taylor Swanson

**City staff in attendance:** Zack White, Nick Voitiuc.

**City Council in attendance:** None

**Introductions**

It was announced that this was Charly's first meeting as chair of the Green Team. Charly then asked the group to introduce themselves and share one thing they were excited about for 2025. Most members expressed excitement about traveling, pursuing hobbies, and the changing seasons

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Noha motioned to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, David seconded.

**III. General Discussion**

Charly lead with the Habitat house meadow project. She commented that Lower Shore Land Trust was unable to provide seeds for fall planting. However seeds will be obtained for planting in the spring, and again the following fall. She stated it would be a good use of the Green Team funds.

Charly then discussed the Lake Street litter cleanup initiative that took place in December. She highlighted the improvements made since the previous cleanup, emphasizing that the efforts of the Green Team, along with community outreach, have contributed to a noticeable reduction in the amount of litter in the park

It was noted that Liv was not present to talk about transportation updates. Elise mentioned BPAC (Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee) meeting for November and December were postponed. Nick mentioned that the January BPAC meeting was tomorrow (January 9th).

Matthias provided an update on the Education Subcommittee. He mentioned that he would be sending out blueprints for Instagram posts, initially to Green Team members, and eventually to the city. The goal is for these posts to be shared on the city’s social media pages to support education and outreach efforts.

Charly asked the group if anyone would be interested in leading the Green Business Subcommittee. She emphasized the need to create a plan that defines what it means to be a green business. Elise noted that it is not easy for businesses to become certified as green, and suggested that the process may need to be reviewed. Christine inquired about the benefits of being a green business. Charly and Matthias explained that along with the inherent contributions towards overall sustainability, the certification helps consumers identify businesses that are environmentally conscious.

Charly mentioned that Liv expressed a desire to expand the focus from litter cleanups to composting, aiming to reduce consumption and change people’s habits rather than just responding to litter. Christine mentioned that she would like to take over the litter efforts but suggested separating the composting and waste management aspect to avoid being overwhelmed initially. Christine will be leading the litter cleanups moving forward.

Dave brought up the idea that increasing the "tax" on paper bags could help to move people to use more reusable options. Elise pointed out that the city actually cannot legally impose a tax on those items which is why the minimum ten cent charge for paper bags goes directly back to the businesses. This can help them to offset costs of paper over plastic while still encouraging the customer to avoid the fee altogether and bring reusable.

Dave questioned whether these plastic reduction policies would even have the mayor’s support. Matthias responded that the existence of the Green Team itself demonstrates the city’s backing of such initiatives. He also highlighted that Zack and Nick, as liaisons, provide an important connection between the Green Team and the city administration. Mike suggested presenting ideas to the mayor in such a way that would show the benefits of these policies, beyond just the environmental aspects.

Dave inquired about the city's efforts regarding food waste and whether they have a diversion goal. Nick responded that the city is adopting a 10-year waste plan, which should address these issues. Charly then asked Dave if he would lead the waste subcommittee, to which he agreed.

Charly mentioned that she felt the Tree Cover subcommittee could be paused, as Zack and Nick from the city would be managing the ongoing efforts to enhance the city's tree coverage

Matthias shared that he sees value in creating educational content and believes public advocacy is a key part of the mission. He expressed his willingness to serve as lead to education subcommittee again. He then brought up Perdue, noting that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) reported PFAS contamination in local waterways. As a result, Perdue is required to fund the installation of water filtration systems in homes where PFAS levels are elevated. However, Matthias pointed out that there are no significant efforts to protect wildlife. He asked if the city is taking any action regarding the PFAS issue. Zack mentioned a multi-million dollar filtration system to be installed at the Paleo Water Treatment Plant in 2027, which will address PFAS in drinking water, but he was unsure about other efforts. Matthias suggested conducting PFAS testing at Peggy Branch to check for elevated levels, expressing concern that contaminated water may be reaching the Chesapeake Bay*.*

Who will lead the sustainable transportation subcommittee was brought up. Elise said that she would lead the subcommittee if Olivia was not interested.

Charly mentioned the Boundless Garden noting that it currently has no steward and asking if the Green Team would be interested in taking it on. Elise mentioned that it would be helpful to have more people involved, sharing that she had reached out to her contacts for support but had not had any success. She explained that while the garden was primarily a vegetable garden in the past, she plans to plant more flowers instead to reduce maintenance and transform it into a pollinator garden. Noha suggested a group chat for the garden, which could be useful for connecting with people who might be interested in helping.

Charly asked everyone to consider which subcommittees they would like to lead. Taylor volunteered to lead the Meadows Subcommittee*.* Elise encouraged Charly to review the responsibilities of subcommittee members for the benefit of new participants. Charly explained that these responsibilities include organizing meetings outside of regular Green Team meetings, maintaining information in regards to the subcommittee, and reporting updates back at the regular Green Team meetings.

Zack shared some updates from the city about progress on the “Terrascaping” plan to plant more trees throughout the city. He mentioned a meeting with the Field Operations department soon to work out logistics. Zack also mentioned working on renewing the city’s Bird City certification.

At 6:24 Dave motioned to adjourn, Elise seconded, and the meeting adjourned.