Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting.

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

**Members in attendance:** Charly Sager, Elise Trelegan, Mike Angelot, Noah Bressman, Catherine Skeeter, David Burt, Ley Rideout.

**Members of the public in attendance:** Dylan Maine, Christine Maine, Grey Lee, Jacky Grindrod, Cindy Dillon

**Staff in attendance:** Zack White, Nick Voitiuc.

**City Council in attendance:** None

**I. Introductions.**

Charly asked the group to introduce themselves. She then introduced the guest speakers from the Sierra Club; Cindy Dillon and Jackie

**II. Guest Speaker**

Cindy from the Sierra Club introduced her organization, which follows the motto “Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet.” She explained that their focus is on environmental legislation, with zero waste being one of their major campaigns. Cindy also told the group about HB 232, the Maryland Bottle Bill, which was the main topic of their presentation.

The presentation highlighted Maryland's litter problem, using a picture of a street in Berlin as an example. The image showed bottles, cans, and plastic bags scattered along the edges of the street, extending up to the curb.

Cindy explained the deposit return system as part of the Bottle Bill. She described how a small deposit would be charged on beverage containers, which would be refunded when the container is returned. The concept is that you purchase the beverage but "rent" the container. The goal is to reduce plastic pollution and increase recycling rates. States that have implemented this program have seen positive results.

Cindy says that if the bill is passed, it would not go into effect until 2028, giving the state enough time to develop the infrastructure needed to support the initiative. This infrastructure includes reverse vending machines and bulk can and bottle drop-off sites.

She stated that the initiative would create jobs and generate savings for local governments by reducing municipal solid waste.

She encouraged members of the Green Team to take action by photographing litter when they see it and sharing it with friends, family, and decision-makers. She urged everyone to advocate for the Bottle Bill and get others to endorse it. Additionally, she asked members to call local legislators and the governor to voice their support for the bill.

She ended the presentation saying that in states where the Bottle Bill has been implemented, it has a 90% approval rate across both Republicans and Democrats. She then opened the floor for comments and questions.

Dave asked if the Governor would be on board, to which Cindy stated she wasn’t sure about the Governor’s position.

Nick raised concerns about homeless people digging through trash in neighborhoods with the intention of finding bottles to return to the reverse vending machines. He spoke about experiencing these things in his time in New York City.

Noah shared that in his experience with similar initiatives, he hasn’t seen those kinds of problems in residential neighborhoods. He explained that usually these people do not see value in rummaging through residential trash since there isn’t enough recyclable material.

Grey spoke about his experience studying abroad in Sweden and their culture around environmentalism. He used this experience to support Maryland’s Bottle Bill, believing it would be a positive step for the state.

**III. Approval of Minutes & City Updates**

Charly motioned to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Noah motioned to approve, Elise seconded.

Zack asked the group if they approved of a purchase of a bench made by the previous sustainability coordinator. The bench was charged to the Green Team’s funds, and used a significant amount of their budget. The group confirmed that they did not approve this purchase.

Zack and Nick assured the group they would sort out where the charge should go.

At 6:30 Dave motioned to adjourn, Ley seconded.