

The Boonsboro Environmental Commission (BEC)

Tenth Annual Report January 2022 – December 2022

Membership

- 9 members at start and end of year

Budget (Town Fiscal Year is July 1 to June 30)

- Approximate Annual Spending Budget
 - July 2021 - June 2022 - \$3,500 Special Projects
 - July 2022 - June 2023 - \$12,500 Special Projects
 - \$500 Public Outreach and Education (Speakers are typically offered \$100)
- Expenses
 - The BEC provided milkweeds during the Fall Tree giveaway (FY July 2022) - \$122
 - Tree plaques in Shafer Park (FY July 2021) - \$1,558
 - Shafer Park Butterfly Garden Cleanup lunch and creeping thyme (FY July 2021) - \$41 + \$36 = \$77
 - Milkweeds purchased for Shafer Park Butterfly Garden (FY July 2021) - \$34
 - Flyers for the swap and recycle event (FY July 2021) - \$210

Special Projects

- Community Garden Project/ Community Garden Planning team
- GIS Consultant for Tree Inventory
- Shafer Park Butterfly Garden
- Fall Tree Giveaway + Milkweeds

Grants/ Certifications

- Educational Signs and Brochures: Tree Board/ Kim Pruitt, MUCFC grant (\$1k) - Approved
- Antietam-Conococheague Watershed Alliance: Chesapeake Bay Trust Urban Tree Grant (percentage of funding will purchase 50 trees for Boonsboro) - Approved
- Community Garden Project - Fencing: Nora Roberts Foundation (\$24k) - Approved
- Community Garden Project: American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) - Declined
- Community Garden Project: Chesapeake Bay Trust - Declined
- Tree Board/ Kim Pruitt: Tree City USA recertification and Growth Award
- Town: Sustainable Communities designation through Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Sustainable Communities Act of 2010) - Approved

Guest Speakers

- 12/13/2022 5 Million Tree Grant: Anna Twigg - Tree Planting Specialist at Maryland Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources
- 05/10/2022 Hagerstown Community Garden: Rodney Tissue - Director of Parks and Engineering for the City of Hagerstown
- 03/08/2022 Monitoring of Local Stream Temperature: Susan Simonson – Antietam Conococheague Watershed Alliance (ACWA)
- 01/11/2022 FNP Community Garden: David Muns - Manager of the Frederick News-Post Community Garden

Events

- October 9, 2022 - Fall Tree giveaway pickup/ delivery/ planting
- October 8, 2022 - Fall Bulk clean up and recycling event in Shafer Park with Green Fest Committee
- July 24, 2022 - Monarch Waystation weeding and mulching
- June 20, 2022 - Monarch Waystation cleanup and milkweed planting
- May 14, 2022 - Green Fest committee hosted a Swap and Recycling event at Shafer Park
- May 3 - October 25, 2022 - Farmers Market
- April 24, 2022 - Annual Shafer Park and stream cleanup. Arbor Day celebration, a new tree was planted in Shafer Park and Jeff Davidson presented a tree care seminar.

Town Newsletters

- Submitted articles to 4 of 4 quarterly newsletters in 2022
 - September - Recycling Electronics
 - July - Fireflies, Fall Tree Giveaway 2022 announcement
 - April - Community Garden Request for Participation, Survey, and Spring gardening and pollinator tips. Swap and recycling event article.
 - January - Fall Tree Giveaway Recap for 2021 planting

Subcommittees

Waste Reduction

- Green Fest Swap and Recycling event on May 14, 2022
 - Flyers were printed and distributed
 - Potomac Edison donated over 100 trees for us to give out at the plant swap.
 - Students earned SSL hours
- The Fall bulk clean up and recycling event, held on October 8, 2022, was another huge success.
- Commission member Solberg collected plastic nursery pots of any size from BEC members at her residence.
- Celebrated Plastic Free July (plasticfreejuly.org).

Green Team

- Commission Member Vesely received a thank you letter from Mike Hunninghake in support of SB-14, continuous funding for the Sustainable Maryland Certified program.
- Commission Member Vesely researched Sustainable Maryland Certified categories, distributed log in information to Green Team. Sustainable Maryland Certified certification is due December 2023.

Beautification Subcommittee(s)

- Monarch Waystation
 - The Monarch Butterfly Waystation was weeded and mulched by BEC members. Town provided mulch.
 - Additional Milkweed and creeping thyme planted
- Trees (+ Tree Board)
 - Kim Pruitt became the new Tree Board chairperson!
 - Collaborated with Town on environmental Geographic Information System (GIS) Consultant. Contract was awarded. Tree Board and other commissions continue to collaborate on the design of GIS products for the Town.
 - Fall Tree Giveaway - Volunteers helped identify locations, plant trees, and assist with the giveaway
 - Educational signs were purchased and installed in Shafer Park

- Memorial plaques were purchased for trees in Shafer Park. Dedication of this year's Arbor Day tree to Bruce Schmidt, plaque was included in purchase.
- Tree board members identified and reviewed “main street” locations for large street trees through the Antietam-Conococheague Watershed Alliance, Chesapeake Bay Trust Urban Tree Grant.
- Washington County planted some small “tube trees” at the library.
- Green Spaces (+ Garden Planning Committee)
 - Commission member Solberg invited the BEC to the grand opening of the Master Gardeners sensory garden at the library in Boonsboro held on August 18th.
 - Commission members Vesely and Wetzel met with Kyle Sonneberg of Living Canopies to price out a “living wall” for the parking lot where the Farmers Market is held. Prices range from \$8800 to \$13k.
 - Community Garden planning team kicked off in September 2022
 - Toured Hagerstown community garden November 30th, 2022.
 - Submitted 3 grant applications for community garden funding
 - Presented to M&C on the community garden in Shafer Park project. Location near the Boy Scout building and Pavilion 4 was approved by M&C and the Park Board.
 - Conducted town resident survey via paper ballot in July utility bill to assess interest in a community garden. Results were favorable toward having a community garden.
 - 47 of 80 (59%) responded that there is value in a community garden.
 - 35 of 47 (74%) would support a small annual fee.
 - 13 people volunteered to be on the garden subcommittee.

Strategic Plan

- Last updated October 2021
- 2022 Goals
 - Completed: Encourage the town to become an official Appalachian Trail Community. The AT is one of our area’s most important visitor attractions.
 - Not Completed: Establish a community walking program to encourage healthy living practices among town residents.

Public Education/Outreach

- 4 guest speakers presented to the BEC

Energy

- The town’s Electric Vehicle (EV) station is getting more use (especially with the increase in gas prices). National Drive Electric week is September 23rd – October 2nd. The closest Drive Electric Week event to Boonsboro is Poolesville, MD, and is scheduled for September 17th.
- No EV charging station statistics from Potomac Edison have been able to be obtained to date.
- Commission Member Wetzel expressed concern about third party solar provider businesses are not always transparent in pricing and contract. Town residents may need to be informed that it’s better to select your own energy source through Potomac Edison if complaints arise.

Nominating Committee

- Election of BEC Officers November 2022: The slate of officers was presented by the Nominating Committee and elected by unanimous vote as follows:
 - Chairperson: Cassandra Ladino
 - Vice Chair: Laura Schnackenberg
 - Secretary: Amy Jones

Farmers Market

- The Farmers Market in 2022 ran for 26 weeks, from May 3 to October 25, 2022.

- Average of 336 customers weekly.
- Approximately 30 different vendors.
- New this year - 2 food trucks and/or beverage vendors each week on a rotating schedule to enhance the market and attract new customers. 9 food trucks participated.
- New this year - Town assisted to supply a power source for musicians. Secured 6 local musicians to perform.
- New this year - "Frequent Buyer Card" program. There were over 200 completed cards entered in the raffle, and 10 prizes were given away.
- Continued the Maryland Market Money (MMM) program allowing our customers with EBT/SNAP, Women Infants & Children (WIC) and Farmers Market Nutrition Benefits federal benefits to double their benefits at the market. It was a successful season with many repeat MMM customers visiting our tent each week.
- Special Events:
 - Milkweed and Zinnia seed give away
 - July recycling event
 - 2 story times (provided by Commission Member Schnackenberg)
- Special Note:
 - The 2022 Market was a success! A tremendous amount of work was necessary to give the market a great re-energized start. This hard work was provided in the months prior to the season opening on May 3rd by Jen Raab (FM Manager), Kathy Vesely, and Leigh McFarland. In addition to the pre-season work, each week during the 26-week season, specifically commission member Vesely attended the market to help set up at 2:30 and stayed until closing at 7:30. Her hard work and dedication is to be commended!

On the Horizon for 2023

- Construction of Community Garden in Shafer Park
- Monarch Waystation responsibility and annual maintenance
- Creation of new MS4/ Tree Inventory GIS communication products
- Continue to support the Town's priority for large scale Tree plantings
- Sustainable Maryland Certified certification
- Explore glass recycling and composting
- Establish a community walking program to encourage healthy living practices among town residents.