

**2022 Sustainable Maryland Committee
Meeting Minutes, July 11, 2022**

The members below were present:

Chiara Atoyebi

Megan Pierce

Orissa S

Sophia Yarrow

Non-Committee Members Present:

Pablo Wolfe and Lizz Kleemeier

Approval of June Committee minutes

The minutes for the June Committee meeting were approved on July 6 2022.

Meeting Minutes

The committee was joined by Liz Kleemeier and Pablo Wolf of Friends of Native Trees Takoma (FONTT). They discussed FONTT and their desire to work with the SMCC committee on an Arbor Day Symposium for 2023. Lizz followed up with a draft of our online discussion and some of the ideas proposed. This event would provide a way for the committee to accrue a lot of points for the certification. The FONTT Team also expressed a desire to attend our meeting with Sustainable Maryland when they join us. I also attached Lizz's original document with links in the email.

Six Ideas for Joint FONTT-SMC Activities (Lizz and Pablo)

July 19, 2022 draft

Prepared by Lizz Kleemeier

Introduction

Friends of Native Trees in Takoma (FONTT) will discuss these ideas (and others) during August

to decide which activities interest members. If the Sustainable Maryland Committee (SMC) is interested in an activity, FONTT members may see that as a good reason to volunteer to implement it.

To implement any joint activity requires two people willing to act as task managers, one from SMC and FONTT respectively. Each activity will likely require additional volunteers who are willing to help organize it. Those volunteers can come from SMC, FONTT, other groups, or interested residents. ¹ Note that if recruiting volunteers proves difficult, the activity should probably be dropped or delayed.

1. Takoma Park Native Tree Selection Guide

What: FONTT has completed a major portion of this activity, namely producing the guide. The important next step is to inform residents about the guide and to use it as a tool to educate residents about why to plant native trees and how to select an appropriate tree

How: Publicize through social media, emails, flyers, and advertisements. Talk to people about the guide by having tables at events such as the Street Fair, Farmer's Markets, and Arbor Day. Establish a fontt.org webpage with posts, comments, and questions about the guide. . Use the FONTT website to host Q&A and discussions about the major messages in the guide.

SMC Role:

- Disseminate through City social media, Sustainability Office email list, article in Takoma newsletter, Sustainability Resource Center (if created).
- With funding, send out flyers to same households that get Public Works flyer about leaf collection.
- Organize tables at events with FONTT

¹ This suggested structure is vaguely reminiscent of how Bowie deploys its Green Team.

FONTT Role:

- Maintain access to guide on fontt.org.
- Establish a webpage to host Q&A and discussions about the major messages in the guide.
- Sell paper version of guide through Coop, Audubon Naturalist Society, and other interested vendors
- Disseminate through neighborhood listservs and Twitter
- Organize tables at events with SMC

FYI: FONTT expressed its interest in collaborating with the City in a presentation to the City Council. The Urban Forest Manager (UFM) subsequently meet with FONTT members and reiterated his reasons for refusing to disseminate the guide. The UFM's decision does not affect the SMC's decision unless SMC agrees with his reasons.

2. Arbor Day Native Tree and Plant Sale

What: Host sales by area nurseries that specialize in native trees and plants at the Arbor Day venue. The sale will drive attendance at Arbor Day, make a more diverse selection of native plants and trees available to residents, and acquaint residents with local nurseries.

How: Contact vendors to determine interest and arrange for them to set up.

SMC and FONTT Roles: This is a lot of emailing and telephoning for the two task managers and

a few additional volunteers in the months prior to Arbor Day. The work begins with identifying and learning from someone who has organized such an event in the past (e.g., National Arboreteum).

3. Arbor Day Poster Display and Awards Ceremonies

What: Teach elementary school children about the benefits of native trees around the activity

of making Maryland Arbor Day posters. Help boost Arbor Day turnout by getting parents and kids to come to the poster display and awards ceremony, and inviting award presenters (e.g., Jamie Raskin, Tom Perez, Mark Ehrlich, Tom Hucker) who will attract an audience and help promote the event.

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How: The Arbor Day poster display and awards ceremonies would be the tail end of teaching modules in the Takoma Park elementary schools leading to poster-making and a competition for the best posters in each school by participating grade. The Arbor Day event would require logistical coordination in setting up and taking down the displays, and arranging the awards ceremony.

SMC Role: Handle the lion's share of the Arbor Day arrangements for the poster display and awards ceremony.

FONTT Role: Handle the teaching module and in-school arrangements with principals and teachers. Pablo Wolfe will be the Task Manager from the FONTT side. **He will prepare a concept note by August.**

4. Arbor Day Symposium

What: Have indoor activities in the Community Center Atrium and auditorium to drive participation at Arbor Day and to educate residents. Ideas for activities include,

- Environmental Group tables in Atrium
- tree seedling giveaway by Arbor Day Foundation or other group
- Screening of Bringing Nature Home to Takoma Park
- Panel discussion with Doug Tallamy and others
- Q&A with plant sale vendors and landscape designers about using native trees, shrubs, and

plants

There could also be some kids' activities, e.g., ask TakomaPlays! to organize activities.

How: Arranging for environmental groups will involve a lot of emailing and telephoning, plus the arrangements with the City about use of the Community Center. If there's a budget to pay honorariums, FONTT could arrange a panel discussion with Tallamy. If not, FONTT could arrange with local experts, but these are not likely to draw the large audience that Tallamy would.

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5. Sidewalk Native Gardens Interpretive Walks

What: A few neighbors on Park Avenue have planted native gardens in the Right-of-Way next to the street. These neighbors are considering applying for a city grant to get professional signage to create a Native Garden walk. (This concept is loosely based on the Smithsonian Gardens' Habitat exhibit linking gardens around the Mall.) The walk would be for all interested Takoma Park residents. Park Avenue is a good location for such a walk because people use it going to the Community Center and the nearby elementary schools, and to Old Takoma Business Center.

If successful, these kinds of native garden walks could be replicated in other neighborhoods, to bring education about education about biodiversity and protecting nature closer to residents.

How: Most of the work would be done by the residents but the grant/budget for professional signage has to come from elsewhere. SMC may be able to help with that. SMC and FONTT could study the experiences of this neighborhood group to see how to formulate a citywide program to encourage other neighborhood groups to create similar walks.

6. Bio-blitz

What: A BioBlitz is an outdoor event – maybe an afternoon, maybe a weekend – in which scientists and amateurs (community members including kids) use phone apps to gather information on an area’s biodiversity. The data are useful when uploaded to a citizen science project, plus the event is a fun social gathering. The National Geographic Society has a how to bio-blitz guide on their website. Googling “bio-blitz” will bring up many more examples.

How: City Wildlife, a DC non-profit, organized a DC area bio-blitz last year. A Takoma Park bio-blitz could potentially be coordinated through them. However, there are other potential partners as well: University of Maryland, Bee Lab at Patuxent Wildlife Reserve, Friends of Sligo Creek to name a few.

A couple FONTT members are enthusiastic about a bio-blitz but no one has volunteered to organize one.

After the presentation and discussion with the FONTT team, which was recorded, the committee stopped the recording at 8:13 p.m. and Pablo and Lizz left.

Sophia, Chiara, Megan and Orissa discussed the committees next two meeting dates which will be Monday August 1, 2022 and Monday September 12, 2022.

Gina Matthias is contacting the Sustainable Maryland Team to solidify a date for them to join one of our next meetings.

The committee also moved to have the Prioritization Tool Spreadsheet Updated with recommendations for the Council to explore on August 1, 2022.

We will turn in what we have at that time. You can find a link to the spreadsheet [here](#).

Gina can provide feedback by September 1, 2022 if possible.

Line items 4 and 5 of the agenda were addressed during the discussion at large.

The committee mentioned a newsletter but determined that it may require more volunteers than we have at this time.

Final thoughts surround concretizing the timeline and fine points of the certification process before the year concludes, Also, planning the Arbor Day symposium over the next 8 months,

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

