



## 2019 Was BIG – 2020 Will Be BIGGER!

First of all, a big thanks to everyone's huge focus on being more sustainable. We are thrilled to see and participate in many new sustainable activities in our neighborhood, our nearby communities and cities, as well as in the U.S. and abroad. Below is a synopsis of a few of our collective accomplishments this past year.

### Town of Somerset



**Pesticide-Free Lawns:** More neighbors have committed to having pesticide-free lawns, indicated by a sign posted at their curbs. If you would like a sign for your home, please email us at [TOS.environmentcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:TOS.environmentcommittee@gmail.com).

Seventy scientists recently reported (Guardian.com, "Urgent new 'roadmap to recovery' could reverse insect apocalypse") that the removal of ALL pesticides is critical to the health of our planet.

**Compost Crew:** We now have 191 households composting, an uptick from the 128 when we started a few years ago. Composting hugely reduces our landfill trash and creates mulch. From Somerset's foundational commitment to them, Compost Crew has now doubled in size in one year, expanding to other neighborhoods in MD. To sign up, please call (301) 202-4450.



**Electric Cars:** We had a successful July 4th electric car show-and-drive event, and we can now see more electric cars in the neighborhood, including one owned by our very own Mayor Slavin! (who says he was greatly influenced by this event!)

**Leaf Blowers:** Our community is purchasing an electric battery-operated leaf blower, as an example for others to follow.

**Leaf to Mulch:** Many neighbors are now electing to mow their leaves instead of placing them at the curb. Doing this returns precious nutrients back to your yard and creates free mulch! I personally did it for the first time and it looks great. You are welcome to come by and take a look!

### Nearby Communities

**DC Green New Deal:** DC passed the boldest green legislation in the US, committing to 100% renewable energy by 2032. They have also banned the use of straws. Their new slogan is: "DC Doesn't Suck!"

**DC Ban on Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers:** DC has also passed legislation to phase out the use of gas-powered leaf blowers by 2022. As a result, landscapers must use electric blowers, which are quieter, now have long-lasting batteries, and emit no cancer-causing VOC fumes.

**Chevy Chase Village:** CC Village has recently followed DC's lead on its DC Leaf Blower legislation, and many in Somerset hope our town will do the same.



**LED Street Lights:** Many communities in Montgomery County have LED street lights, including Martin's Additions and Chevy Chase Village. This obviously saves a lot of money, energy and has similar light quality. Somerset continues to work on bringing LEDs to our neighborhood.

### USA and Abroad



Across the United States, hundreds of cities, states and corporations are moving to sustainable practices and green energy use. Further afield, Europe is leading the world by implementing aggressive green laws and practices. I have been gratified that our own Parachutes for the Planet

initiative, [www.motherearthproject.org/parachutes](http://www.motherearthproject.org/parachutes), has distributed thousands of parachutes in 71 countries and 43 states. That is a commitment to sustainable action with echoes across the globe. Inspired by the AIDS/HIV Quilts of the 1990s, Parachutes are a metaphor for bringing the planet back to a safe place, a sustainable world that is vital to our health, safety and future. Play parachutes (non-functional) are 12' diameter 100% recyclable circular pieces of cloth decorated with artwork and collective commitments to sustainable actions. Decorating parachutes is a powerful activity of sharing and learning and it strengthens a community's focus on taking action and demanding better environmental laws.

### What You Can Do (in addition to the above)

**Trees for Air Travel:** Buy trees to offset your airplane travel (in Europe, all airlines ask for an extra \$5-\$10 for each flight, donated to a sustainable cause). To plant \$1 trees in a specific region of interest on the planet, go to: [www.onetreeplanted.org/collections/where-we-plant](http://www.onetreeplanted.org/collections/where-we-plant)

**Trees for Birthdays:** Buy 25 \$1 trees for your loved ones/ friend's birthday instead of consumables. And then, encourage them to do the same.

**Carbon Offset Your Life Style:** You can now calculate your natural gas bill, airline travel, etc., and determine how much carbon needs to be offset. One neighbor used [www.terrapass.com](http://www.terrapass.com) and calculated that paying \$200/year to sustainable charities would offset his family's carbon footprint. (You can also just donate this amount each year to a sustainable cause but obviously removing carbon emissions where possible from your lifestyle is best!)

**"No Plastic Please":** Choose meals or grocery items that use less or no plastic. At restaurants, tell the waiter immediately "no plastic please."

**Eat Less Red Meat:** Perhaps 2 times a week instead of 5. Chicken is one sixth the carbon footprint of red meat and turkey is one eighth.

**Join or Start a Climate Strike:** at your school on Fridays with Greta Thunberg's movement, <https://fridaysforfuture.org>

### Donate to Environmental Causes

**Wash Your Plastic:** before placing it in the blue bucket and take all plastic bags/bubble wrap to the grocery store recycling bins.

**Choose 100% Renewable Electric Energy:** Nearly half of Somerset households now use renewable electric energy. It is less expensive than your present rate and you still will retain your Pepco bill. To change to 100% renewable energy, please go to: [www.motherearthproject.org/renewables](http://www.motherearthproject.org/renewables).

### And the list goes on...

It is all about AWARENESS.

Please continue to talk with friends, family, neighbors and associates about the Climate Emergency. We have noticed that this is no longer a taboo subject and that people are now freely sharing environmental information, e.g. Australian bushfires, Arctic permafrost melting, and new climate legislation. Let's Keep Up Our Efforts in 2020!



## TOWN ELECTION COMING IN MAY...

Town Election for Mayor and Two Council seats will be held on  
Wednesday, May 12th.

Nominations will be made at the April 6th Council meeting.