



## Bee Forum – A SUCCESS!

The Environment Committee hosted a Zoom forum on June 7 to discuss the benefits of placing an apiary in our Town parkland (near Wisconsin Avenue). During the Forum, three very experienced and knowledgeable beekeepers shared their expertise, including descriptions of successful apiaries in local communities and neighborhoods. The experts who participated were: Maureen Jais-Mick, who manages the Montgomery County Bee Keeper's Association Bee Yard at Brookside Gardens; Leon Vanderberg, who cares for bees at Leisure World; and Elizabeth Harris, who is a certified beekeeper and neighbor. These experts explained clearly how, unlike yellow jackets and hornets, the honeybees that we are considering for our Town are not aggressive. They also described the enormous benefits that bees provide for the environment and our gardens! For those interested in watching the recording of the Forum, the link is: <https://youtu.be/VTqMlxCn-xU>.

We encourage residents who support having an apiary in our Town to write a short email to the Town Council, at [manager@townofsomerset.com](mailto:manager@townofsomerset.com).

## Environment Committee Recommends Banning Gas-Powered Weed Wackers

The noise generated by gas-powered leaf blowers (GPLBs) and other gas-powered lawn equipment, like gas-powered weed wackers, is associated with adverse health effects, such as tinnitus, increased blood pressure and an elevated heart rate. As is the case for leaf blowers, alternative electric and battery-operated models of weed wackers can reduce these health risks for residents and landscapers. Many are reasonably priced, so a transition to electric weed wackers for landscapers and



Town residents would be straightforward. Such a transition could follow our current process for shifting from the soon-to-banned gas-powered leaf blowers to electric and battery-powered leaf blowers.

Therefore, to further reduce noise in our Town, the Environment Committee recommends that the Town Council ban gas-powered weed wackers, beginning Sep 1, 2023. If passed by the Town Council, the Environment Committee intends to continue its education campaign about weed wackers and other more sustainable gardening practices.

## Environment Committee Recommends a Wine Cork Recycling Program

The Environment Committee was recently approached by Town resident **Laurent Guinand** (Warwick) about a wine cork recycling program, which would place a small container at the Town Hall for residents to deposit their corks! Laurent's small business, <https://recork.com/>, collects corks and ships them in bulk to California for re-use in multiple industries (shoe soles, insulation for houses, etc.). These types of applications replace petroleum-based products with cork-based ones. We hope the Town Council will support this sustainable program.

If you have ideas regarding how our Town can become more sustainable and carbon-free, please reach out to the Environment Committee at: [tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com).

[Editor's notes:

1. The link to the recording of the Bee Forum is also provided in Committee-Provided Resources on page 15.
2. Please see the preliminary agenda for the next Town Council meeting for items regarding the apiary and a ban on weed wackers, on page 16.]