



Environment Committee Recommends Requiring Landscape Plans for All New Construction To Not Include Invasive Species

Background

Invasive plant species are plants that not only thrive in our region, but they rapidly spread and choke out native species, destroying natural habitats and our local ecology. For example, there are over 1,000 species of bamboo, none of which are native to North America (bamboo is from China originally). Bamboo is particularly aggressive, and if one cuts the plants down, the root system reacts by generating more new stalks the following year. It can only be removed by uprooting its heavy underground root system. English Ivy is another invasive species that climbs trees and chokes them, and it also flowers at the top of trees and spreads its seeds over larger spaces.

In general, invasive species (animals as well as plants) pose a *huge* problem in the U.S. They include non-native fish destroying the Great Lakes ecosystem, as well as large pet snakes (anacondas) set free in the Everglades, which are wreaking havoc on native species.

Recommendation

At its May 18, 2023, the Environment Committee (EC) unanimously voted to recommend to the Town Council

that going forward, all landscaping plans for new construction in our Town not include any invasive species.

The EC also recommends that the Town Council make a public announcement encouraging all residents to consider not planting any invasive species and, if possible, remove invasive species.

As an illustration, I am presently working with a number of backyard neighbors to remove a large stand of 35' high bamboo, which has been expanding rapidly for the last 20 years. It has threaded through the root system of our trees and has now invaded the walls of our garage — yikes! So far, it has been a great experience working with neighbors to find common ground for removing this invasive species. Please take the time to consider working with neighbors to deal with shared invasive species.

A useful list of Maryland invasive plant species can be found at these links:

- <https://bit.ly/45jx37M>
- <https://bit.ly/44g2iPz>

Back to School Classic Race Coming October 1

By Thomas TerBush, Race Director, Cumberland Avenue

Autumn is arriving this month, which means that the Somerset Elementary Back to School Classic Race is right around the corner!

The 8K/2K race welcomes all ages, with medals for the top 3 times in multiple age categories, with the same routes and Sunday morning start times as in previous years.

The Back to School Race is the Somerset Elementary PTA's biggest fundraiser of the year and has become the largest community event with hundreds of spectators and volunteers cheering on more than 600 runners.

The 8K race is a sanctioned race with chipped bibs and official timing, while the 2K race is truly a fun run open to all runners and walkers large and small.

So whether you want to run the 8K and get a great time and a better workout, or have a blast rolling with the crowd in the 2K, please register for either race or to volunteer at www.somersetrace.com.

It all happens Sunday, October 1! We'll see you there!!