

"Where People and Trees Have Deep Roots and Grow Strong"



Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 69 • No. 2

February 2024



Sustainability Corner

By Barton Rubenstein, Chair,
Environment Committee,
Dorset Ave

Environment Committee Recommends Composting for All

Background

Recently, at the climate conference COP28 in Dubai, there was a declaration, for the first time, that the world needs to focus on sustainable agriculture. Apparently, 1/3 of greenhouse emissions are related to food systems – that’s a lot! To compare, emissions from transportation account for about 29% of greenhouse gases. Food systems include methane from cows, food waste, deforestation to create fields to raise animals, and an assortment of other emissions that arise from the way we create food for the world. This article helps to understand the issues at stake and the lobbying groups that are attempting to thwart our ability to create a more sustainable world:

<https://bit.ly/426VggM>.

In accordance with our Town’s pledge to become more sustainable, the Environment Committee is focused on ways to reduce our landfill garbage. Presently, we have a robust co-mingled recycling program that recycles paper, glass, plastic, and metal. Using your blue bucket to separate recycling from garbage should reduce your landfill considerably. However, food scraps are another huge item that is responsible for a lot of our landfill.

Food scraps (which include meat, vegetables, eggshells, and coffee filters and grounds) are a very important part of our ecosystem and can be used by farmers as fertilizer and as an energy source as well.



Fortunately, we already have a composting service, Compost Crew, that our Town provides for free. The problem is that only 40-45% of our Town residents use this service. In order to encourage more participation and thus reduce our Town’s landfill, the Environment Committee is recommending the following.

Recommendation

The Environment Committee recommends that the Town distribute composting buckets to every household that does not already have one — unless the family indicates they do not want one — and sign them up for composting. The Environment Committee will coordinate an education campaign on composting, and bins will be distributed so

Continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE



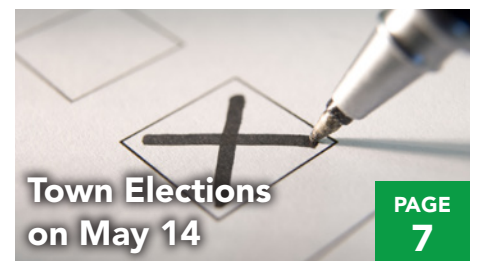
Art to Heart
Exhibit at
Somerset Town
Hall Gallery

PAGE
4



Somerset
Crime
Report

PAGE
5



Town Elections
on May 14

PAGE
7

Continued from page 1

Sustainability Corner

the expanded program can launch in conjunction with Earth Day, April 22, 2024.

In general, food scraps should not be placed in the kitchen sink's disposal as these clog the machines at the water treatment facilities. One simply has to place the food

scraps in the compost bucket (e.g. placed under the sink) and then take it to the street every Monday night – simple! We realize this may require a change in our lifelong habits in the kitchen, but please remember that ALL of us have to participate in creating a more sustainable planet.

Environment Committee Recommends Banning Gas-Powered Weed Whackers

Piggybacking on our ban of gas-powered leaf blowers, the Environment Committee has recommended extending the ban to gas-powered weed whackers as well. As is the case with leaf blowers, these noisy machines could also be much quieter if one were to use electric or battery powered weed whackers.

Recommendation

For the purpose of further reducing the amount of noise that residents of the Town must tolerate, the Environment Committee recommends that the Town add gas-powered weed whackers to our existing ban on gas-powered blowers. The ban would begin on January 1, 2025.

Please let us know if you have any questions or sustainable ideas for the Town at tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com.



Somerset's Helping Hand Is Just an Email or Phone Call Away

If you need a ride, someone to pick up some groceries or a prescription, a ride to the Metro, or even if you just want to get to a friend's house, please contact **Somerset Helping Hand**. We have a list of 30 Somerset volunteers who can help.

Send an email to HHSomerset@gmail.com or call **Barbara Zeughauser** at 202-368-9986 **Kathleen Kenyon** at 301-651-0758 or **Jim Berry** at 240-994-3939.

If you would like to add your name to the volunteer list, please send an email to HHSomerset@gmail.com.

HAVE STUFF TO DONATE?

Montgomery County VOLUNTEER CENTER

Please check out this Montgomery County website for places that may accept your items: <https://bit.ly/47ed7EK>

*Information provided by
Lauren Rubenstein (Surrey)*