

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



Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 69 • No. 10

October 2024

Sustainability Corner

Lots Going on in Somerset!

By Barton Rubenstein, Chair, Environment Committee

There is an abundance of environmentally focused activities in our Town happening presently and starting within the next year.

Composting

As you know, compost buckets have now been distributed to almost half of the residents in our Town this past month. This means over 95% of our Town now composts — congrats to all! Please call the Town Manager if you have any follow up questions. In the meantime, enjoy composting and helping the planet.

Solar Panels

New solar panels are slated to be installed on the Town Pool building roof next spring. This will help a LOT to offset the enormous amount of energy our Town uses to operate the facility. Solar panels will occupy about 1/3 of the roof (the nearest side as you approach), which is the section that receives the most amount of sun. Typically, about 80% of a solar panel's contribution happens

between 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., when the sun is at its highest point.

Town Sustainable Procurement Policy Passes

Our Town Council recently passed a comprehensive policy that makes sure all the products that the Town acquires, as well as services that the Town contracts, follow strict sustainable practices. This is a very important step in Somerset's focus on its carbon footprint as it relates to its supply chain, as well as other UN Sustainable Development Goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>). This is huge for our municipality. If you would like to read more about this, please contact the staff at the Town Hall.

Gas Powered Leaf Blowers to be Banned in Montgomery County Starting July 1, 2025

Thanks to Somerset's ban and resulting advocacy, and the work of other municipalities, signs are now being posted on Ride On buses and elsewhere announcing that the county-wide ban is about to begin. In addition to

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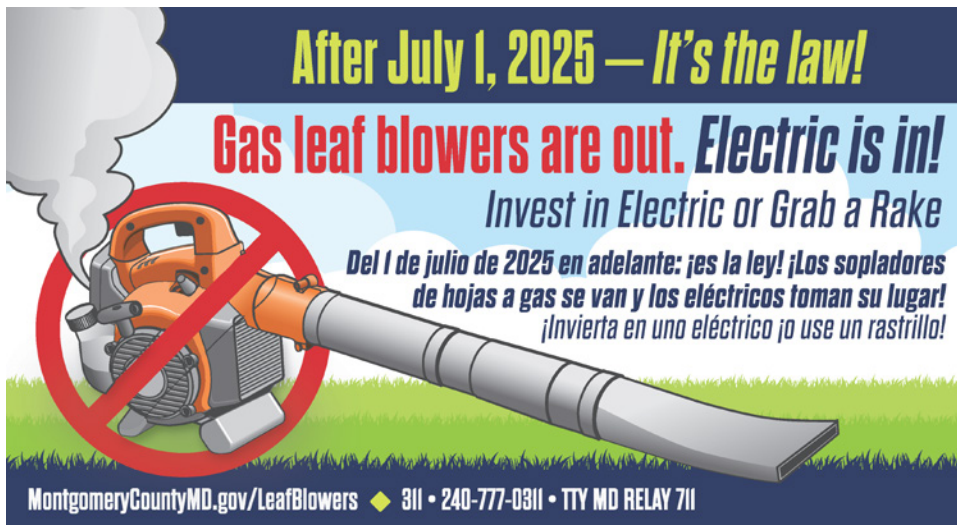
our Town's relief from these noisy machines, the rest of the County can now have the same peace and quiet time outside.

Make Your Backyard a Homegrown National Park

On September 12, the Environment Committee invited area landscaper Kris Colby of Backyard Bounty to make a presentation about his efforts to help residents make their properties more "natural and wild." This includes both reducing the amount of grass

on one's property and using only native plants. Colby's work is inspired by the Homegrown National Park movement (homegrownnationalpark.org), which provides a plethora of information about restoring biodiversity where we live. It also includes a map of the participants with over 40,000 people participating. Colby has worked with over 200 properties in the DMV that are now registered and on the map! To learn more about this important movement and how to participate, please watch the recording on the Town website at <https://bit.ly/47z6BsJ>.

If you have any questions or concerns about this program, please feel free to reach out to the Town Hall, or contact the Environment Committee at tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com.



Youth Council Teen Pool Night Recap

By Sara Guinand, Youth Council President and Ari Peters, Youth Council Mayor

On August 17, the Youth Council¹ hosted the first ever Teen Pool Night, its first project! This was the Youth Town Council's first project. There were about 35 people who showed up! Kalman Levitin and a few of his friends played wonderful live music. It was perfect weather for an evening full of fun. The event started off with teens socializing on the pool deck while building their own "Chipotle" bowls. After a while, everyone started to migrate into the pool. Highlights included diving board contests, fun rallies of volleyball in the water, intense ping pong matches and close cornhole games! The Youth Town Council invited

"Clayboys," a shave ice business, to be a part of the night but there was also an ice cream sundae station for people who wanted ice cream. Sweet treats were enjoyed after a nice late-night swim.

Overall, Teen Pool Night was a resounding success! The Youth Town Council is thrilled about the prospect of making it an annual tradition for high schoolers in our municipality. The event was designed to be inclusive and bring together teens of Somerset. A huge thank you to Kalman Levitin for playing live music and to the amazing lifeguards that helped to clean up. The Youth Town Council looks forward to hosting more events similar to these!

¹As a review: At its meeting on October 2, 2023, the Town Council established the Somerset Youth Council, as a pilot program. On June 6, 2024, the Town Council passed a Charter drafted by the Youth Council making it a new, exciting part of Somerset's government. The Youth Council provides an opportunity for young persons in Town to foster community, increase engagement, and educate about the local government process.