

Notes from meeting of MET's Land Committee
Wednesday January 26, 2022
1:00 pm

Attending Committee Members: M. Benjamin, J. Jitkoff, A. Jones, C. Wells
Attending MET Staff: J. Chapman, A.G. Carlson, J. Turgeon, J. Markline, M. Mingus
Attending OAG staff: T. Kovacs

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 1 pm

Agenda Item 1:

- a) Easement Program Update: AG Carlson provided the following update:
- Michael Mingus joined MET on December 15, 2021 as our new Conservation Easement Planner. M Mingus introduced himself to the Committee.
 - Conservation Easement Program Manual completed in time for M Mingus to use. We will make edits based on his feedback.
 - AG Carlson is continues working with MET's Records Manager on how best to archive and organize the records that the Easement Program creates.
 - Five Conservation Easements recorded since the last meeting. These easements added 1,042.518 acres to MET's portfolio of protected lands:
 - Thorne; 56.37 acres in STMA recorded on December 16, 2021
 - MIV Real Estate LLC, 153.56 acres in WORC recorded on December 17, 2021
 - Watson, 245.621 acres in DORC recorded on December 29, 2021
 - Aspen: Angus parcel, 327.151 acres in QUEE recorded on January 25, 2022
 - Aspen: Point Fields, 259.816 acres in QUEE recorded on January 25, 2022
 - Thus far in FY 2022 MET has protected 1085.827 acres.
- b) **Easement Pipeline Report:** AG Carlson presented the pipeline and noted the following:
- Patriot Point LLC (290.741 ac in DORC) UPDATE: This easement will be solely held by MET. When the Committee and Board approved, I proposed that the Navy through REPI funding would co-hold with MET. The Navy is no longer involved with the easement and full funding if from POS. This change does not affect MET's responsibilities as Grantee. This project is set for the February 16, 2022 BPW meeting and should be recorded in spring 2022.
 - New active projects to note are two in Garrett County. AG Carlson and M Mingus has a productive day meeting with these landowners and seeing these properties. We anticipate bringing them to you for review and approval at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Conservation Easement Projects

- a) **44.97 +/- acres, Bottiglieri project, Harford County with Harford Land Trust A.G.** Carlson presented the proposed conservation easement project. M. Benjamin moved to

recommend approval of the project for the Consent Calendar. C.Wells seconded the motion. **The committee unanimously recommended approval of this project to the Board of Trustees on the Consent Calendar.**

- b) **95 +/- acres, Cline project, Charles County with Conservancy for Charles County,** A.G. Carlson presented the proposed conservation easement project indicating a change from the memo that due to the lack of visual or physical access by the public of the historic structure, the conservation easement will not include historic structural protections. The easement will allow for archeological study subject to Grantee approval. M. Benjamin moved to recommend approval of the project including the Staff noted change regarding the historic structure and archeology, for the Consent Calendar. J. Jitkoff seconded the motion. **The committee unanimously recommended approval of this project, subject to the Staff noted change, to the Board of Trustees on the Consent Calendar.**

Agenda Item 3: Stewardship Program

Status Report:

A total of 326 CEs monitoring reports have been generated in the first half of the fiscal year (from July 1 to Dec 31). The majority (210; 64%) were conducted remotely using the Lens system; 155 (~3/4) by Contractor Chris Honcharik. Some Lens reports still need to be ported from Lens to MET's database.

On The Ground monitoring stats: 64 by Staff (2/3 by Josette, 1/3 by Wendy), 37 by Volunteers, and 7 by Staff & Coholders together 8 by Coholders alone, which is vast underestimate; we expect another 200-300 from LLTs who have until March to report their Fall '21 accomplishments.

There is some overlap between ground and remote monitoring, which will aid staff in comparing costs and benefits of remote monitoring. The benefits of reduced staff time spent driving, and reduced associated costs of fuel, CO₂ generation, and vehicle depreciation are obvious. The downside is reduced communication with landowners that comes from either calling to confirm visit schedule or onsite during a ground visit.

Josette conducted 18 successor owner visits to introduce MET, explain the conservation easement, answer questions about restrictions, forestall actions that out of ignorance might violate the easement.

Staff continues working with MD Dept of IT and its contractors to develop a new field data collection tool to replace the problematic KOBO tool; we hope for completion by end of fiscal year

Staff met with OAG for Quarterly Review earlier in January to further discuss resolution of more than 20 difficult stewardship issues: Many are due to different interpretations about early CE language, aging of donors and transfer to successor owners that don't share the donor's vision or

commitment to conservation; others due professed ignorance or poor understanding of CE restrictions.

We have finalized the contract for another year of access to Lens remote monitoring system; Cost: \$8K plus 6 cents/ac for hi res photography, (\$2500 est). Estimated Total Cost: \$10.5K

Joint with Michelle Grafton, Staff is planning for Feb. 15 Roundtable on Remote Monitoring joint with staff from Lower Shore Land Trust and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, who will discuss what's needed to prepare, how to conduct, what it costs, and Return on Investment

Working with Michelle and the OAG to determine best means to formally transfer all responsibility to MET for certain CEs held with low capacity organizations that wish to cease being a land trust (assignment or quit claim).

Likewise, are looking into filing Notice of Conservation Easement for easements held with land trusts that have ceased operations without conveying responsibility to MET, or for a set of the oldest easements held by MET that in a few years may not be discovered by standard 60 yr title search lookback.

<p style="text-align: center;">2022 LANDS COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE</p>
January 26
April 20
May 25
August 31
October 26