

Maryland Environmental Trust
Board of Trustees Open Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2022

Trustees Present:

Gary Burnett, Chair

Greg Bowen, Vice Chair

Mark Hoffman, Vice-Treasurer

Julia Jitkoff, Treasurer

Megan D'Arcy, Secretary

Thomas (Toby) Lloyd

Megan Benjamin

Susanne Richards

Lori Lynch

Tom Prevas

Nathan Volke

Senator Adelaide Eckardt (representing the Maryland Senate President who is an ex-officio trustee)

Tom McCarthy (representing the Governor of Maryland who is an ex-officio trustee)

Trustees Absent:

Ken Montague

Diana Conway

Keith Colston

Delegate Jim Gilchrist (representing the Speaker of the House of Delegates who is an ex-officio trustee)

Others Present:

John Turgeon, Director, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET Staff)

Phil Hager, Assistant Secretary, Land Resources MD Dept. of Natural Resources

Ann Carlson (MET Staff)

Jon Chapman (MET Staff)

Michelle Grafton (MET Staff)

Josette Markline (MET Staff)

Michael Mingus (MET Staff)

Kelly Price (MET Staff)

Wendy Foster (MET Staff)

Cindy Hoffmann (MET Staff)

Talley Kovacs, Assistant Attorney General (Office of Attorney General)

Roger Medoff, Assistant Attorney General (Office of Attorney General)

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Gary Burnett called the regular meeting of the MET Board of Trustees to order at 4:05 p.m.

II. Minutes of the September 12, 2022 Regular Meeting

Chair Burnett called for a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees held on September 12, 2022. Mr. Bowen motioned to approve the minutes; Senator Eckhardt seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

III. Chair's Report

Chair Burnett welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Burnett recognized that this was the last meeting that Senator Eckardt would attend as the representative of the President of the Maryland Senate. He and several others in attendance, thanked Senator Eckardt for her time, effort and the insight that she has given to the Board over the years. Senator Eckardt mentioned that she would be interested in accompanying staff on monitoring visits in the future.

Mr. Turgeon took a moment to recognize Delegate Jim Gilchrist, although not in attendance, for his service as the representative of the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates. Delegate Gilchrist did not run for re-election and will be leaving the legislature at the start of 2023. This would have been his last board meeting.

Chair Burnett brought up the topic of a holiday gathering and solicited ideas from those in attendance. The initial suggestion was a two part event that would involve exploring the Bacon Ridge property in Crownsville via a hike, then gathering at Lures Restaurant afterwards. Both of these locations are in close proximity to the MET office in Crownsville. A poll will be issued to everyone in the near future to decide on a plan.

Ann Carlson - Presentation on MET's Process for Acquiring New Easements

In continuing with Chair Burnett's initiative to improve board member knowledge of land conservation and MET's practices, Ms. Carlson shared a Powerpoint presentation entitled "MET Easement Program - Primer for The Board of Trustees". Ms. Carlson's presentation gave a birds-eye view of the process MET's Conservation Easement Program staff follows to bring a conservation easement to fruition.

Ms. Carlson indicated that she would ensure board members receive a copy of the most recent Model Easement and Conservation Easement Policy document. Mr. Turgeon mentioned that the updated Trustees Manual has been completed and an electronic version is available on the MET

Website under the Board login page.

IV. Director's Report

Mr. Turgeon referred to his director's report that was provided to board members prior to the meeting. The report gives an updated account of new conservation easements and the number of existing easements that have been monitored thus far in fiscal year 2023. It discusses the leadership role MET and the American Chestnut Land Trust are playing on behalf of Southern Md. Conservation Alliance, by working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on its plan for the proposed expansion of the Patuxent Research Refuge's land and easement acquisition boundary. Mr. Turgeon mentioned that the planning process began in 2011 and is now in its final phase.

Mr. Turgeon recently met with Donald and Ingrid Graham, owners of a property MET holds a Conservation Easement with, to discuss succession plans for ensuring the long-term preservation of the property. The property consists of 450+ acres in a remote section of western Wicomico County and contains an historic 18th century residence known as Long Hill. In addition to its important historic resources, the property contains significant frontage along both sides of the Wetipquin Creek, which flows to the nearby Nanticoke River. This property offers exceptional opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, and nature exploration. Mr. Turgeon approached Ms Nita Settina, Superintendent of the Park Service about the potential opportunity to acquire Long Hill for parkland. Ms. Settina expressed great interest in the property. Mr. Turgeon coordinated two subsequent meetings with the Grahams, Park Service staff, and DNR Land Acquisition staff to further discuss what the Grahams envision for the property. There was some discussion of the Grahams leaving an endowment to the Park Service to maintain the property. If the Park Service acquires this property it will be the first state-owned park in Wicomico County.

Mr. Turgeon attended an event hosted by the Charles Koiner Conservancy (CKC) at the Koiner Farm property in Montgomery County. MET co-holds with CKC the conservation easement on this one acre property. It was a great opportunity to meet CKC board members and supporters and to see, first hand, that Koiner Farm is truly thriving thanks in part to its conservation. CKC is currently working with Montgomery County on a new initiative to protect two additional properties for use as urban farms. Mr. Turgeon pointed out that both CKC's strategic plan and the initiative in Wheaton were made possible due to grant funding provided to CKC from MET's Keep Maryland Beautiful Grants program.

On November 2, MET staff again volunteered with the nonprofit Blue Water Baltimore for a tree planting project. The project took place in the Irvington neighborhood of Baltimore City. Together with other volunteers and tree planting experts from Blue Water Baltimore, 25 balled and burlapped street trees were planted along South Woodington Road.

The Keep Maryland Beautiful grants program is now accepting applications for 2023. Forever Maryland continues to administer the program on behalf of MET. Again three different grants are being offered to assist volunteer-based nonprofit groups, schools, municipalities, and land trusts that support environmental education projects, citizen stewardship, and land trust capacity and programming. The deadline to apply for funding is November 15, 2022 and awards will be announced in March of 2023. Total funding for this grant round is \$92,000.00 which is a considerable reduction from previous years due to the loss of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development as a funding partner. Mr. Turgeon pointed out that MET is in the preliminary stages of partnering with the Maryland Department of Agriculture for future funding. More information about the grants and the application process can be found at <https://forevermaryland.org/grants-page>.

V. Committee Reports

A. Governance

Mr. Lloyd raised the issue of Trustee Ken Montague's inactivity for the past two years. He noted that several attempts have been made by him, Chair Burnett, and Mr. Turgeon to reach Mr. Montague which has proven unsuccessful. The Governance Committee recommended at the last meeting to address the full board on the matter.

Mr. Lloyd made a motion for the board to remove Ken Montague as a full board member. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jitkoff. All members of the board who were in attendance voted unanimously in favor of removing Ken Montague from the MET Board.

Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Turgeon have continued their work with Ms. Kovacs of OAG on drafting updated board bylaws. It is anticipated that a draft of the bylaws will be presented at the February 2023 board meeting for approval.

Ms. Lynch offered to review new board member training materials and is working on a plan to hold training sessions. These sessions will be offered to new board members. Sitting members are also welcome and encouraged to attend.

At their last meeting the Governance Committee unanimously voted favorably to add Alice Chalmers to the list of recommended board members. It was noted that Ms. Chalmers is extremely knowledgeable and passionate about land conservation. She is the past director of Future Harvest and is an expert in food systems. Ms. Jitkoff noted that she became familiar with Ms. Chalmers in her role on the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council board. She feels that Ms. Chalmers is particularly passionate about, and has had great achievements at, assisting farmers with marketing their products. She has work experience in other states in this line of work.

Mr. Lloyd made a motion for the board to include Alice Chalmers to the list of recommended names for a potential MET trustee position. Senator Eckhardt approved the motion and Ms. Benjamin seconded. All voted in favor of adding Ms. Chalmers to the list.

Mr. Lloyd informed the board that the vacancy created by Mr. Montague's removal can be filled by the board electing one of the names from the most recent list of board nominees submitted to MET by the Governor . The Governance Committee reviewed the list of nominees and voted on recommending one of the nominees, Craig Highfield, to become a full board member. Mr. Highfield is employed by the Alliance of the Chesapeake Bay and currently works very closely with MET on a number of projects. Mr. Chapman and Ms. Grafton confirmed that MET has a good ongoing relationship with Mr. Highfield.

Mr. Lloyd motioned to approve offering Craig Highfield full membership on the MET board. Mr. Bowen approved; Mr. Volke seconded. All voted in favor of offering a full board membership to Mr. Highfield.

In the event that the offer is declined by Mr. Highfield the Governance Committee recommended Julia King as an alternate candidate. Ms. King's bio was provided to board members in the board meeting packet. She is also one of the nominees listed on the most recent list submitted to MET by the Governor.

Mr. Lloyd motioned for the approval of Julia King to be the alternate selection for full board membership in the event that Mr. Highfield declines the position. Senator Eckhardt approved the motion; Mr. Bowen seconded. All voted in favor of the vote.

B. Finance

Ms. Jitkoff reported on MET's Board administered funds. She indicated that the value of the funds, which are held with Brown Advisory, have increased almost \$100,000 since the end of the last quarter. She reported that after extensive research, electronic bill pay is still not an option at the present time as Fidelity does not allow businesses and foundations to utilize that service.

Three financial reports for Q1 2023 (profit and loss by class, budget versus actual, and the balance sheet) along with the Brown Advisory summary were distributed to the board prior to the meeting.

Ms. Jitkoff asked for a motion to approve the three financial reports. Mr. Lloyd approved and Ms. D'Arcy seconded the motion. All voted in favor of approving the

reports.

Mr. Turgeon stated that the Memorandum of Understanding with Forever Maryland was reviewed during the last Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Jitkoff reported that the Committee agreed to approve the MOU. A copy of the document was provided in the packet.

Mr. Turgeon reported that he, Michael Mingus and Josette Markline recently attended the annual land trust rally held in New Orleans, LA. He mentioned a few of the sessions he attended and noted that it was a great opportunity to network with people in the land conservation field. He thanked the Finance Committee and board for their support in making their attendance possible.

C. Lands

Ms. Benjamin stated that the Lands Committee reviewed the proposed projects listed on the consent agenda and recommended them to the Board for approval.

There are four new conservation easement projects and five new stewardship projects.

Consent agenda

Proposed new easements to MET

- a. Proposed grant of easement on 276 acres in Queen Anne's County from John F. Harper, III
- b. Proposed grant of easement on 60.9 acres in Garrett County from Savage River Land Co., LLC
- c. Proposed grant of easement on 128.5 acres in Talbot County with Eastern Shore Land Conservancy from 500 Beaver Road II, LLC
- d. Proposed grant of easement on 31.98+/- acres in Harford County with Harford Land Trust from Harford County government.

Actions on existing MET easements

- e. Request to amend conservation easement to extinguish rights, Talbot County (MET Easement file #0950KEN07.TALB)
- f. Request for new means of access, Baltimore County (MET Easement file #1043HEA12.BACO)

- g. Request to amend conservation easement to extinguish rights, Carroll County (MET Easement file #0662HAC02.CARR)
- h. Request for third amendment of a conservation easement to clarify and record allowed activities, Harford County (MET Easement file #1138IWL19.HARF)
- i. Request to amend conservation easement, Kent County (MET Easement file #0995DUE09.KENT)

Ms. Benjamin called for a motion for approval of the consent agenda as presented. Chair Burnett seconded the approval. All voted in favor of the consent agenda.

Mr. Mingus reported that two conservation easements were recorded recently. Masonville Cove in Baltimore City on September 15, 2022 and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in Charles County on November 3, 2022. That brings MET's total recorded conservation easements in FY 2023 to three and a total of 221 new acres protected. It is anticipated that seven additional conservation easements will be recorded by the end of FY 2023. Mr. Mingus said that he and Ms. Carlson continue to represent MET in several collaborative partnerships through the various meetings they attend.

Mr. Mingus stated that he and Ms. Carlson have 24 projects they are actively working on with 29 additional projects waiting to move forward.

Mr. Chapman stated that monitoring efforts are proceeding quite well with 189 monitoring reports entered into the database. The majority of the reports were conducted utilizing the LENS online aerial imagery review system and a significant number were conducted by staff and volunteers. Stewardship staff continue to be busy with customer service tasks such as providing copies of documents, explaining the remaining rights on easements to potential purchasers and reviewing requests to exercise rights for improvements on easement properties. Mr. Chapman, Ms. Markline, and Ms. Grafton have been working with a trio of land trusts in Frederick County in an effort to assign stewardship responsibilities to the Catoctin Land Trust and are nearing the final stages. Stewardship staff is working with the Maryland Forest Service on providing concrete information about potential opportunities on easement properties for enhanced stewardship projects. They've connected with the Maryland Association of Stream Restoration to obtain a list of major businesses that perform this service. Staff approached the University of Maryland extension office with a request that they be a resource for providing the public with a list of these professionals.

D. Land Trust Advisory Committee

Mr. Bowen passed around the latest MET publication, Landmarks, 2022 Stewardship Edition. He mentioned that Mr. Turgeon, Ms. Markline and Ms. Grafton are collaborating

with DNR's Forest staff on an outreach project to inform MET's easement landowners about Maryland's Planting Five Million Trees program.

MET and Forever Maryland are designing a succession planning workshop entitled "Passing The Baton". The workshop will be held in-person on November 30, 2022 in the first floor conference room of the MET office building. Ms. Grafton stated that she will be forwarding registration information after the meeting.

Mr. Turgeon and Ms. Grafton have been continuing to work with the Southern MD Conservation Alliance to advance an area of the state that has the most undeveloped and unprotected land.

Mr. Bowen noted that MET's annual report has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by management.

VI. Other Business

None.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

Chair Burnett motioned to adjourn the meeting; Senator Eckhardt approved and Mr. Bowen seconded the motion. All voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m.