

Maryland Environmental Trust
Board of Trustees Open Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2022

Trustees Present:

Gary Burnett, Chair
Greg Bowen, Vice Chair
Megan Benjamin
Diana Conway
Delegate Jim Gilchrist (representing the Speaker of the House)
Mark Hoffman, Vice-Treasurer
Julia Jitkoff, Treasurer
Thomas (Toby) Lloyd
Lori Lynch
Tom McCarthy (Governor's representative)
Susanne Richards
Nathan Volke

Trustees Absent:

Megan D'Arcy, Secretary
Senator Adelaide Eckardt (Senate President's representative)
Ken Montague
Tom Prevas

Others Present:

John Turgeon, Director, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)
Ann Carlson (MET Staff)
Jon Chapman (MET Staff)
Wendy Foster (MET Staff)
Michelle Grafton (MET Staff)
Cindy Hoffmann (MET Staff)
Josette Markline (MET Staff)
Michael Mingus (MET Staff)
Kelly Price (MET Staff)
Talley Kovacs (Office of Attorney General)

I. Call to Order

Board Vice Chair, Greg Bowen called the regular meeting of the MET Board of Trustees to order at 4:06 p.m.

II. Minutes of the May 2, 2022, Regular Meeting

Vice Chair Bowen called for a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees held on May 2, 2022. Mr. Lloyd motioned to approve the minutes; Ms. Jitkoff seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

III. Chair's Report

Chair Burnett thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

Ms. Jitkoff left the meeting.

1. Chair Burnett called for a motion to approve Julia Jitkoff to continue as the Treasurer for her remaining term of one year. Mr. McCarthy approved the motion and Mr. Bowen seconded. All voted in favor for Ms. Jitkoff to continue in the role of Treasurer for one year.

Ms. Jitkoff returned to the meeting.

Mr. Hoffman left the meeting.

2. Chair Burnett called for a motion to approve Mark Hoffman as the Vice Treasurer for his remaining term of one year. Mr. McCarthy approved the motion and Ms. Conway seconded. All voted in favor for Mr. Hoffman to continue in the role of Vice Treasurer for one year.

Mr. Hoffman returned to the meeting.

3. Chair Burnett called for a motion to elect Megan D'Arcy as the Secretary for a full two-year term. Mr. McCarthy approved the motion and Ms. Benjamin seconded. All voted in favor of electing Ms. D'Arcy to the role of Secretary for a two-year term.

IV. Director's Report

1. FY23 Annual Work Plan

Mr. Turgeon called attention to the FY23 Annual Work Plan that was submitted in the Board Packet prior to the meeting. The plan corresponds with the FY23 operating budget of the Board managed funds and consists of the fundamental ongoing land conservation and stewardship work. The Finance Committee approved the budget at its last meeting. Mr. Turgeon expects there to be slight modifications to the plan in order for it to align with the Five-Year Strategic Plan which is in the development stage. He expects to present that plan to the Board at the September meeting.

Mr. McCarthy called for a motion to approve the FY23 Annual Work Plan; Mr. Hoffman seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

2. NFWF (National Fish & Wildlife Foundation) Grant Proposal

MET requested the Board's consideration to prepare a proposal for submission to NFWF for the America the Beautiful Challenge Grant on behalf of Forever Maryland and the Regional Conservation Partnerships in southern and central Maryland. Mr. Bowen exhibited a slide presentation (distributed to Board members prior to the meeting) which explained the grant and gave a broad overview of MET's mission and plan, should it be awarded. This would give MET the opportunity to assist Land Trusts in purchasing properties that could otherwise be lost to development. There was some discussion about MET's eligibility, the benefits and risks related to MET's obligation of reimbursement, and the potential to submit a request for proposal for an outside contractor (potentially Forever Maryland) to manage the funds. MARBIDCO was mentioned as a potential partner. The deadline for the application is July 25, 2022.

Mr. Bowen called for a motion to move forward with drafting the proposal; Mr. McCarthy approved the motion; Ms. Lynch seconded. All voted in favor of drafting the grant proposal.

V. Committee Reports

A. Governance

Nothing to report.

B. Finance

Ms. Jitkoff reported that, as of May 30, 2022, the combined balance of the MET Board's endowment funds managed by Brown Advisory was \$3,456,504.

Ms. Jitkoff reported that the actual YTD spending through April 2022 was \$133,000. The projected budget for the Board funds (aka private side) in FY23 has been set at \$141,000 which is considerably less than FY22. Mr. Turgeon stated that a large portion of the spending in FY23 is allocated to the Stewardship program for utilization of the LENS software and for incentive payments to local land trusts for monitoring co-held easements. A portion of the funds slated for Board events and meetings covers Mr. Burnett's and Mr. Turgeon's participation in the LTA's Wentworth Program. The contract will be renewed with MET's bookkeeper, Ms. Mona Rudnicki, who manages and oversees the spending within this budget.

Ms. Jitkoff reported that a conversation was had during the last Finance Committee Meeting with respect to determining a realistic budget for MET to comfortably work within. Four percent of the income from the Brown Advisory accounts would equate to approximately \$140,000. If MET can keep the budget near to this number, it would prevent the potential for spending down the endowment.

Mr. McCarthy moved for approval of the budget as presented; Mr. Bowen seconded the motion. Mr. Burnett asked for a vote in favor of approving the private side FY23 budget. All voted in favor with no further discussion.

C. Lands

1. Committee Report

Mr. Mingus reported that the Patriot Point easement has been recorded in the Land Records. This easement protects a little over 290 acres in Dorchester County. He also indicated that the Masonville Cove easement is in the process of being recorded in Baltimore City.

Mr. Chapman informed the Board that the Lands Committee reviewed and approved three proposals for Stream and Wetland Restoration Projects on MET easement properties (2 in Frederick County; 1 in Baltimore County). He reported that MET Staff had a discussion with the firm Ecotone on the conditions that need to be met in order to receive final approval for one of the projects near Middletown in Frederick County, which include, but are not limited to, identifying the overlay easement holder; OAG review of the overlay easement template; and that the project obtains all necessary federal and state permits. Mr. Chapman further stated that this "Middletown" project will be a highly visible showcase for stream restoration. The project entails converting a highly degraded stream course, visible from Old Route 40, into a functioning stream and wetland habitat.

Mr. Chapman reviewed the up-to-date statistics on monitoring visits since the beginning of FY22. MET has exceeded its goal of 700 and Mr. Chapman attributes that accomplishment to the great efforts of Ms. Foster, Ms. Markline, MET's volunteers, and its local land trust partners. A total of 812 monitoring reports have been collected and processed to date. Those reports apply to 736 unique easement properties with 76 properties receiving both "on the ground" and "remote" visits. These dual visits allowed MET to compare the efficiency and cost savings between the two visit types on those properties. Stewardship Staff anticipates collecting reports on 750 to 800 unique properties by the end of FY22.

Mr. Chapman apprised the Board of the incentive program offered to local land trusts which allows a monetary benefit for conducting visits and forwarding the reports to MET. Under the new budget proposal, the benefit will increase from \$25 to \$30 per report for donated easements and from \$75 to \$90 per report for Rural Legacy easements.

Mr. Chapman noted that, due to the robust real estate market and aging population of easement donors, Stewardship staff has seen an increase of inquiries from the public and donors' families with requests for copies of easements and interpretation of easement provisions. Ms. Markline has spent a good bit of her time meeting new landowners and familiarizing them with MET. He stated that Stewardship staff continues to work with the Dept. of Information Technology on a new field data collection tool.

2. Consent Agenda

Requests made on the following properties were approved at the May 25th Lands Committee meeting and forwarded for presentation to the Board for approval.

- a. Request to Approve multi-week, seasonal, temporary commercial event on a conservation easement property in Washington County (0522REI00.WASH)
- b. Request to renew approval of series of temporary commercial events on a conservation easement property in Washington County (0274FRO94.WASH).

Mr. McCarthy moved for approval of the two items presented on the Consent Agenda; Mr. Burnett seconded the motion. All voted in favor of moving forward with the requests on the Consent Agenda.

D. Outreach Committee

Ms. Grafton noted that The Black Swamp Creek Land Trust has requested to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with MET. They are looking to increase their conservation role in southern Maryland. Information about their conservation activities were included on the memo that was submitted in the Board Packet. This will be Black Swamp Creek Land Trust's first agreement with MET.

Mr. McCarthy motioned to approval the acceptance; Mr. Bowen seconded; Mr. Burnett called for a vote, and all were in favor of accepting the Cooperative Agreement from The Black Swamp Creek Land Trust.

VI. Other Business

Mr. Burnett gave an update on the status of the Five-Year Strategic Plan. He feels positive that the plan is moving in the right direction. He stated that the next planning meeting is scheduled for June 27th. A draft of the overarching goals will be designed over the summer and is expected to be presented at the next regular MET Board meeting in September.

Mr. Turgeon talked about the Forever Maryland Land Conservation Conference which was held on June 1 and 2, 2022 at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club. He stated that the Dept. of Natural Resources was well represented, and that MET was recognized as a founding sponsor of Forever Maryland and of the conference. He thanked the five trustees who attended for their participation. He mentioned that, during Forever Maryland's welcome address, he and Ms. Grafton were thanked for their contributions to the conference planning committee. He also mentioned that Ms. Carlson presented in a session on the basics of easement project management and that Ms. Markline presented in a session on easement stewardship and monitoring. Mr. Turgeon went on to recognize that Mr. Bowen was a panel participant in a session on climate change impacts in Maryland and ways people and government can adapt. Mr. Turgeon indicated that there were over 250 people in attendance at the event and noted that every MET staff member attended at least one day of the conference.

Mr. Burnett stated that he would be reaching out over the summer to discuss committee appointments and about making modifications on how Board meetings are conducted in the future.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

Mr. McCarthy motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Bowen seconded. All were in favor of adjourning the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m.