

Maryland Environmental Trust
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2017

Maryland Environmental Trust (“MET”) Board of Trustees (“Board”) Chair James W. Constable called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m. at 100 Community Place, Crownsville, Maryland 21032. Trustees in attendance were James Constable, David Greene, Judge Jay Plager, Connie Lieder, Tom McCarthy, Doris Blazek-White, Gary Burnett, Mary Burke, Roydon Powell III, Phil Hager, Julia Jitkoff, Steve Quarles and Sarah Taylor-Rogers. Assistant Attorney General Kristen Maneval attended. MET staff Bill Leahy, John Turgeon and Tanya Mekeal attended. Kevin Chesley of MD DNR attended.

I. Board Work Plan and Governance Topics

A. February 6, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes: Mr. Greene offered four revisions to the draft minutes. *Mr. Hager moved approval of the minutes with proposed revisions and Ms. Taylor-Rogers seconded. MET Board unanimously approved and adopted February 6, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes as revised.*

B. Chairman’s Report:
Mr. Constable reminded trustees to file their financial disclosures with State Ethics Commission by April 30.

C. Director’s Report:

1. Update on DNR coordinating discussion

Mr. Leahy referred to his Director’s Report. Regarding the first of the two proposals that DNR made to Department of Budget and Management (“DBM”)(promoting a more collaborative relationship between MET and DNR’s Land Acquisition and Planning (“LAP”) unit): MET and LAP held a kickoff meeting. Mr. McCarthy will serve as liaison and chair the next meeting, to be scheduled. LAP recognizes that a strong land trust community is helpful to it as 70% of Rural Legacy easements are held by/with local land trusts. Regarding the second of the two proposals that DNR made to DBM (with approval of State Ethics Commission and others, allowing Mr. Leahy to spend State time on the launch of the nonprofit corporation): Ms. Burke inquired when trustees would have a clearer understanding of what functions would remain with MET and what functions the new nonprofit would provide; this will be discussed at a Board retreat on the week of May 22. As planned, the nonprofit corporation would be a statewide voice for land trusts and land conservation, advocating for public policy changes, raising private funds, performing land trust assistance and community grant-making.

2. Nonprofit feasibility study

Bob Carter Companies, LLC is preparing to conduct 30 individual interviews (those who agree to meet will receive a copy of the case for support) and a few focus groups. Carter’s study will reveal the feasibility of a nonprofit corporation. Ms. Jitkoff suggested that someone from the Governor’s staff be among those interviewed.

3. Annual Plan 2017-2018

Mr. Leahy presented slides about the annual planning process. The goal is to present a rough draft of both the annual plan and budget to the Board next month so that the Board can approve the budget in May or June at the latest. Staff is preparing project plan elements, including timelines and tasks. MET will want to consider the future role of its Land Trust Assistance Committee if land trust assistance will be done by the nonprofit corporation. Mr. Leahy reviewed slides showing progress MET has made thus far toward the strategic vision plan, new developments affecting MET, MET's ideal relationship with DNR, areas where MET sees itself excelling, and the future roles of MET and the nonprofit corporation. Mr. Powell suggested development of another graphic to set forth the core values of MET and of the nonprofit corporation.

4. Land Trust Standards and Practices

Ms. Burke and Ms. Maneval presented on Land Trust Alliance's newly-adopted Standards & Practices ("S & P"), how they differ from the former S & P, and those areas in which MET is still working toward full implementation. All Land Trust Alliance member land trusts must adopt S & P within one year. The Alliance provided a template resolution. Trustees offered suggested changes to the template resolution to make clear that S & P are aspirational and that MET would follow S & P as guidelines. Mr. Quarles, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Constable and Judge Plager will develop a proposed resolution for the next meeting.

II. Committee Reports

A. Governance Committee & Nominating Subcommittee:

Judge Plager reviewed a memo setting forth elected trustees' terms and whether they are eligible for re-election (assuming they are nominated by the Governor, President of the Senate or Speaker of the House of Delegates). Due to Senate Bill 4, Mr. Quarles and Ms. Lieder are not eligible for re-election in May. There is also a vacant trusteeship due to the resignation of former trustee Dan Beard. Ms. Taylor-Roger's initial term will likewise expire on May 31 but she is eligible for re-election and MET's letter to the President of the Senate said MET would treat his October recommendation of her as a continuing recommendation. MET sent letters to the three officials seeking recommendations for trustees and suggested Dr. Lori Lynch, Grant DeHart and Michael Pretl. MET will need to elect a new Secretary on May 1 for a term June 1, 2017-May 31, 2019; Judge Plager suggested that the Nominating Subcommittee consider Ms. Burke. The next Governance Committee meeting will focus on officer succession. Judge Plager may be absent for some Committee meetings; Mr. Constable has named Ms. Jitkoff as Vice Chair of the Committee.

B. Finance Committee:

Ms. Blazek-White presented the Statement of Activities, Actual vs. Budget through January 31, 2017 for MET-Administered Funds. MET is under budget on both income and

expenses but will be incurring expenses before the end of the fiscal year. Regarding the State budget, Ms. Mekeal reported that she had met with DNR finance officials to clear up items that were improperly charged to MET.

C. Land Trust Advisory Committee:

Mr. Hager reported that the Committee spent time talking about the strategic vision statement. It is considering producing an annual report that would highlight activities of local land trusts and those doing innovative work. The Committee is looking for new members with diverse skillsets. The 2017 land trust conference will be on June 8 in Reisterstown. Mr. Hager asked all trustees to participate in the Board Challenge. About \$15,000 in sponsorships is needed. The Committee was pleased with the number of proposed workshops received. Planning for speakers and themes is underway.

D. Legislative Committee:

Mr. Hager said that HB 863 has been withdrawn; the topic will be studied this summer. Since the format of summer study is unknown, MET will ask trustee Dana Stein to keep it abreast of what develops this summer. MET might consider expressing its thoughts on the topic covered by former bill HB 863 and its willingness to be part of the conversation.

E. Agriculture Committee:

Mr. Greene announced that the draft Committee charter is ready for consideration. *Ms. Jitkoff moved approval, Judge Plager seconded and the Board approved the Committee's charter.*

III. Adjourn: The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



James W. Constable
Chair

These minutes were approved/revised by the Board of Trustees on April 3, 2017.

Attachment(s):

Please note that for most attachments listed and that are considered regular meeting handouts (like Stateside Budget/Finance, MET Administered (non-State) Funds Budget/Finance and Director's reports), a copy is stored with Handouts and MET Board Packets for the meeting at which that information was distributed to the Board. In that case, a duplicate copy will not be attached here.