

Notes from meeting of MET's Land Committee
Wednesday January 25, 2023
1:00 pm

Attending Committee Members: G. Burnett, M. Benjamin, A. Jones, M. D'Arcy, C. Wells
Attending MET Staff: J. Turgeon, J. Markline, J. Chapman, A. Carlson, M. Mingus
Attending OAG staff: R. Medoff, T Kovacs

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 1 pm

Agenda Item 1. Lands Committee Charter

J. Turgeon presented the revised draft Charter stating that this revision incorporated all of the comments made by the Committee at its August 2022 meeting. C. Wells moved to adopt the charter as presented. A. Jones seconded the motion. **The Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Trustees ratify the Committee adoption of the Charter.**

Agenda Item 2. Easement Program

a) Easement Program Update: Update to the MET Model Conservation Easement

A. Carlson presented the proposed update to the Committee. A. Jones suggested addition of the local land trust co-holder board approval date into the document. M. D'Arcy moved to approve the proposal as written in the memo for the Consent Calendar. C. Wells seconded the motion. **The Committee unanimously recommended approval of this proposal to the Board of Trustees on the Consent Calendar.**

b) Easement Pipeline Report- A. Carlson and M. Mingus provided the following update:

- Thus far in FY23 MET has completed 9 CE protecting 1063 acres.
- There are 17 active projects. Staff continue to field inquiries from landowner and local land trusts about projects
- The Crownsville project will be signed next week and recorded shortly thereafter.
- The Boehm project was already approved by the board in 2020, subject to the involvement of Scenic Rivers Land Trust, which has been confirmed since then.

Agenda Item 3. Stewardship Program

a) Stewardship Program Updates: J. Chapman provided the following updates:

- **Monitoring:** There's been great progress with monitoring so far this FY: 365 reports done by MET Staff, volunteers, paid interns and contractor
 - Majority (286 or 78%) of monitoring reports done remotely with Lens system;
 - 74 done on the ground, 30 by volunteers and 44 by Staff
 - Hunting and holiday seasons always are low periods for On The Ground (OTG) monitoring, so low OTG #s expected
 - Michelle Grafton has solicited Fall 2022 reports from Local Land Trusts (LLTs), and will be processing those already submitted by Lower Shore LT and ESLC
 - Expect a total of more than 300 LLT reports for this 1st half of FY. 21 reports already processed and entered into LOCATE.
- **Amendments:** J. Markline is processing amendments conditionally approved by the BOT in 2022, which involves:
 - Clarifying chain of title

- Developing bid packages and soliciting and reviewing bids for appraisals, and reviewing appraisal submittals
- Actual drafting the amendment language and working with the OAG for review and approval of language.

Although the MET Amendment Policy remains strict, there has been an increasing number of amendment requests and approvals, and they require significant staff effort to process.

- Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) Chesapeake Conservation Corps: Staff have applied to be host agency for a CBT Chesapeake Conservation Corps intern to assist with monitoring and stewardship. We are soliciting for interested candidates. Speak to Josette if you know of potentially interested candidates.
- Easement Assignments: Staff working with Michelle Grafton on encouraging certain low capacity LTs to assign their coheld easements to MET and/or other stronger LTs in their region that are meeting LT Standards and Practices for monitoring, stewardship and recordkeeping. Currently, those targeted LTs include:
 - Central MD Heritage League in Frederick Co. (5 CEs)
 - Carroll County Land Trust (20 CEs)
 - There is an impasse for getting other coholders to take on these easements, which is that LT S&P requirement that the LT have sufficient Stewardship Endowment funds to underwrite additional stewardship responsibilities;
 - Not many LTs have deep pocketed donors willing to grant funds for stewardship. Is common problem that soliciting new easements is more flashy than managing the ones already in the portfolio.
 - Easement signing and recordation are like the wedding between LT and landowner, Stewardship involves efforts needed to maintain the marriage.
- Technology: ESRI Tool:
 - As OTG monitoring ramps up, Staff will be putting the new field data collection app through its paces and developing requirements for bug fixing and enhancements
 - Volunteers will continue to use the old app until Beta testing and enhancements are complete
- J. Chapman to make webinar presentation in February to the LOCATE database user group on LENS and LOCATE integration
- Staff is working with DNR's Coastal Services group on an analysis of Land Use and Land Cover for entire easement portfolio, using Chesapeake Conservancy hi res dataset, to get accurate measures of Forest Cover, Ag land use, Wetlands and Developed areas

b) Request to replace dwelling unit 0650MYE02.KENT: M. D'Arcy motioned to approve. M. Benjamin seconded the motion. **The Committee unanimously voted to delegate the approval for a replacement dwelling unit to the Director.**

c) Request for stream restoration project on 0050MCS80.BACO: M. D'Arcy motioned to approve the project. C. Wells seconded the motion. **The Committee unanimously voted to approve the stream restoration project.**

d) Conceptual Request to Amend and Restate CE 0077JAC82.BACO: C. Wells motioned for staff to pursue Amending and Restating the CE. M. D'Arcy seconded the motion. **The Committee unanimously voted for staff to pursue amending and restating the CE.**

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.