

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE MARYLAND ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST – May 3, 2021

Attending: Mary Burke, Chair; Major Gary Burnett, Vice-Chair; Julia Jitkoff, Treasurer; Mark Hoffman, Asst. Treasurer; John Turgeon, Director; Wendy Foster, DNR Liaison; Talley Kovacs, Asst. Attorney General;

The Meeting began at 2:00 p.m.

1. John discussed the legislation (HB 992) pertaining to MET's trustee selection process, which was submitted in the just ended General Assembly session. The legislation proposed changing the existing process by having the Governor appoint two trustees each year and the House Speaker and Senate President each appointing one trustee per year. The Board did not reach a consensus as to the best way to select its trustees, although the existing process is cumbersome and makes it difficult to fill vacancies. The proposed legislation ultimately did not pass, but this issue will need to be addressed again in next year's legislative session. The Board will need to come up with a trustee selection process it can support. Mary suggested a survey of MET easement landowners to get their opinions and concerns. She suggested that farmers would have a problem with a board consisting entirely of governmental appointees. Mary will assign to the governance committee and the legislative sub-committee (outreach committee) to gather stakeholder input and explore potential solutions over the summer. Talley suggested a meeting in July with Asst. AG Julia Solomon at DNR who works on legislative matters. Any potential landowner survey will need to be run by OAG.

2. John gave an update on MET personnel. Ann Carlson was officially hired in April as MET's Easement Program Manager. She had been in the "acting" program manager role since May 2019. A hiring freeze exception (HFE) has been submitted to DNR so MET can fill Ann's previous easement planner position that is now vacant. MET also hired Josette Markline as a planner for the easement stewardship program, and she starts work this week. Josette comes to us from Maryland Environmental Service (MES), and she also worked previously as a DNR Park Ranger. Later this month MET will be interviewing candidates for the vacant records/tech staff person. John has been working with DNR Asst. Secretary Phil Hager on a proposed long-term hiring plan for MET to improve staff capacity.

Mary informed the Exec Committee that Megan D'Arcy has agreed to be an at-large member. However, committee secretary Sarah Taylor Rogers is stepping off the board at the end of May due to it being the end of her second board term. Mary will ask Megan if she would serve as secretary. Julia suggested that Greg be asked about being an at-large member of the committee.

3. John discussed the annual work plan for FY 2022 that was included in the board meeting packet. He will provide an overview of the plan at the full board meeting and ask the trustees to review and comment on the plan over the next month. He will ask for board approval at the June meeting. This is the last year of MET's current five-year

strategic plan. One of the work plan objectives is to work with a consultant on developing the next five-year strategic plan.

Mary and John discussed making a request of King Burnett for a donation toward MET's stewardship endowment, given his recent involvement with the Chase Farm easement litigation. For MET to be accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission there will need to be \$3,500 per easement held in an endowment for easement stewardship. There was also discussion about meeting with Forever Maryland to discuss future fundraising efforts on behalf of MET for stewardship and operating funds, now that the two-year grant agreement is about to expire.

4. Mary provided an update on the Forever Maryland Foundation. Steve Quarles has stepped down as Chair of their board. Nick Dilks will be the new Chair.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.