

**Maryland Environmental Trust**  
**Board of Trustees Open Meeting Minutes**  
**May 2, 2022**

**Trustees Present:**

Mary Burke, Chair

Gary Burnett, Vice Chair

Julia Jitkoff, Treasurer

Senator Adelaide Eckardt (Senate President's representative)

Delegate Jim Gilchrist (House Speaker's representative)

Katrina Tucker for Tom McCarthy (Governor's representative)

Megan Benjamin

Greg Bowen

Mark Hoffman

Toby Lloyd

Lori Lynch

Tom Prevas

Susanne Richards

Diana Conway

Nathan Volke

**Trustees Absent:**

Megan D'Arcy, Secretary

Ken Montague

**Others Present:**

John Turgeon, Director, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)

Wendy Foster, MET staff

Jon Chapman, MET staff

Josette Markline, MET staff

Ann Carlson, MET staff

Michael Mingus, MET staff

Michelle Grafton, MET staff

Kelly Price, MET staff

Cindy Hoffmann, MET staff

Talley Kovacs, Asst. Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General (OAG)

Phil Hager, Asst. Secretary for Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Guest Speaker Richard Allen, Director of Equal Opportunity/ADA Coordinator, Office of Fair Practices for Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

## I. Call to Order

Board Chair, Mary Burke called the regular meeting of the MET Board of Trustees to order at 4:05 pm.

## II. Minutes of the February 7, 2022 Regular Meeting

**Chairwoman Burke called for a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees held on February 7, 2022. Mark Hoffmann motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. Lloyd seconded the motion. All voted in favor.**

## III. Chair's Report

- Ms. Burke spoke about the following activities of Forever Maryland (FM)
  - Reminder that this year's annual land conservation conference will be held on June 1 and 2, 2022 at The Chesapeake Beach Club. She gave a brief overview of the sessions. Mr. Hoffmann noted that the Gubernatorial Forum has been canceled. Board members and staff are encouraged to attend the event. Visit <https://forevermaryland.org/2022-mlcc> for more details.
  - FM has been hosting a webinar series titled *Building Better Boards* available offering education on land conservation. If interested, contact Kelly Price at [kellyc.price@maryland.gov](mailto:kellyc.price@maryland.gov) for registration information.
  - FM is making efforts to recruit new members to their Board. If you know anyone who may be interested, please pass their information on to John Turgeon.
  - Ms. Burke announced that \$320,000 in grants were awarded to local Maryland organizations for use towards land conservation efforts.
  
- Ms. Burke reported that the Heirs Property bill (SB0092 HB0077) passed in the General Assembly. This bill protects Maryland families from potentially losing their property when the property has not been named in a will.

Megan Benjamin was excused from the meeting before proceeding with the following motion.

- **Ms. Burke motioned to nominate Megan Benjamin to serve on the Governance Committee. The motion was passed by Ms. Jitkoff and seconded by Mr. Burnett. All voted in favor.**

Ms. Benjamin returned to the meeting.

- Ms. Burke stated that this would be her last attendance as Chairwoman. She reflected on her time in the position and thanked the Trustees and MET staff for their support. She expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to work with such wonderful people and

offered those present to reach out to her at any time in the future. She mentioned that she hopes to see everyone at the next Land Trust Alliance Rally.

- John Turgeon presented Ms. Burke with a Governor's Citation and gifted her a plant. He made kind remarks and thanked her for her service as Chairwoman. Mr. Burnett, Ms. Jitkoff, Senator Eckardt, Delegate Gilchrist and Mr. Allen also offered their gratitude and expressed their appreciation for Ms. Burke's dedication to the Board and her work in land conservation.

#### **IV. Director's Report**

Mr. Turgeon asked Mr. Allen to provide a brief update on DNR's plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ).

- Mr. Allen passed out the Winter 2022 volume of the *Maryland natural resource* magazine and gave a brief history of his background in civil rights work.
- Mr. Allen mentioned that the DNR has incorporated a DEI Employee Infinity Group which had its first meeting in April. They will conduct ongoing monthly meetings to develop a written policy. The Group encourages each DNR unit to write their own DEI plan and put it into practice.
- Mr. Allen expressed his opinion on needing the support of Maryland's Department of Budget and Management to assist the DNR in expanding its outreach to minority groups.
- Mr. Allen commented that Maryland is a diverse state and that MET, and the Chesapeake Coastal Service has been a leader in the DEIJ effort.
- Mr. Allen suggested engaging with various organizations, programs, high schools, colleges, and local farming groups to establish relationships with respect to land conservation endeavors. He specifically mentioned that the University of MD, Eastern Shore and College Park campuses, Morgan State University and Bowie State University have internship programs that MET could partner with.

Mr. Turgeon summarized the following topics from the previously distributed director's report:

- With the completion of seven new easement projects thus far in fiscal year 2022, MET has protected 1130.61 acres of land which exceeds its annual goal of 1,000 acres.
- MET has surpassed its goal of inspecting 700 easements during fiscal year 2022. This accomplishment was achieved by the outstanding efforts of the MET volunteers, staff and land trust partners and the use of LENS software which enables remote monitoring. Mr. Turgeon congratulated the Stewardship staff on exceeding the goal. Mr. Turgeon referred to the 2021 By The Numbers report from his director's report for a more in-depth look at the figures.
- Ms. Burke mentioned that Wendy Foster and Shannon Taylor will be presenting in a Land Trust Alliance webinar on May 19, 2022, titled *Engage, Support, Grow: The Keys to a Thriving Volunteer Program*.

- Mr. Turgeon noted that Ms. Carlson, along with Jared Parks of the Lower Shore Land Trust, gave a presentation on conservation transactions at the Forever Maryland Building Better Boards series. Ms. Carlson and Mr. Parks will be presenting this topic in person on June 1st at the Forever Maryland Conference.
- Mr. Turgeon mentioned that MET's partnership with the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance (SMCA) is already having a significant impact. SMCA is playing an influential role in current efforts to conserve several critical properties in the region that are at risk of development. Mr. Turgeon will be making a presentation about the SMCA to the Patuxent River Commission at its May 11th meeting.
- Mr. Turgeon referred to an article by the Pew Charitable Trusts accompanying his Director's report discussing the increased interest in conservation easements on privately owned land and national conservation strategies.
- Mr. Turgeon referred the Board to his email for the PDF version of the Spring 2022 issue of the Landmarks newsletter. MET's constituents will begin receiving the newsletter in either paper or electronic format in the coming weeks. Mr. Turgeon complimented Michelle Grafton on a job well done as this is the first time the newsletter has been developed in-house.

## V. Committee Reports

### A. Governance

- Mr. Lloyd reported that the by-laws are expected to be completed by this summer and presented to the Board at the September meeting.
- Mr. Lloyd stated that, with the adoption of the bylaws, the responsibility of recommending the next Board Chair will be of the Governance Committee rather than an information suggestion by the current Chairperson.
- Mr. Burnett excused himself from the meeting.
- **Mr. Lloyd recommended to elect Trustee Gary Burnett as MET Chair for a two-year term (6/1/22 - 5/31/24). Ms. Burke motioned to approve the election and Ms. Jitkoff seconded the recommendation. Mr. Prevas and Ms. Conway abstained from voting as they did not have enough information about the electee to make an education decision. All others voted in favor of Mr. Burnett being elected.**
- Mr. Bowen excused himself from the meeting.

- Mr. Lloyd recommended to elect Trustee Greg Bowen as MET Vice Chair for a two-year term (6/1/22 - 5/31/24). Ms. Eckhardt motioned to approve the election and Mr. Burnett seconded the recommendation. Mr. Prevas and Ms. Conway abstained from voting as they did not have enough information about the electee to make an educated decision. All others voted in favor of Mr. Bowen being elected.
- Mr. Bowen returned to the meeting.
- Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Hoffman and Ms. Conway excused themselves from the meeting.
- Chairwoman Burke recommended to re-elect Trustees Toby Lloyd, Mark Hoffman and Diane Conway to MET's board, each to a four-year term (6/1/22 - 5/31/26). Mr. Burnett motioned to approve the recommended individuals and Ms. Jitkoff seconded the recommendation of each. Mr. Prevas abstained from voting as he did not have enough information about the individuals to make an educated decision. All others voted in favor of re-electing each Trustee to their positions for another four-year term.
- Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Hoffman and Ms. Conway returned to the meeting.
- Mr. Lloyd requested a motion for the Board to approve adding Keith Colston to MET's list of recommended trustees. Ms. Burke motioned to approve, and Mr. Burnett seconded the motion to add Mr. Colston to the list. Ms. Burke indicated that Mr. Colston is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about joining the Board. She stated that he has a good mind for government practice.

**B. Finance**

- Ms. Jitkoff referred to the financial reports previously submitted to the Board for review on April 28, 2022. These included the March 31 Balance Sheet, The MET Budget to Actual July 2021 – March 2022, the MET PNL by class April 25, 2022, revised, and the Brown Advisory March 31, 2022 account summary. She mentioned that the market has recently dropped causing an impact on the finances. There was a brief discussion about the report and Ms. Jitkoff explained it in more detail.

- **Mr. Bowen motioned to approve the third quarter financial reports. Mr. Hoffman seconded the motion. All voted in favor of approving the reports.**
- Ms. Jitkoff expressed that MET is currently working on its FY 2023 budget and would welcome any suggestions and invited board members to collaborate with her and/or John Turgeon. Ms. Jitkoff informed the Board that the next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for May 31, 2022.
- Ms. Burke mentioned that Mr. Turgeon will be participating in a leadership program for executive directors in New Mexico from May 23-27, 2022.

**C. Lands  
Committee Report**

Ms. Carlson reported on the following topics:

- The Bottiglieri conservation easement was recorded in late March. This is 44.97 acres in Harford County co-held with the Harford Land Trust.
- The Patriot Point conservation easement 290 +/- acres in Dorchester County closed the last week of April and will be recorded the first week of May.
- The Masonville Cove easement (46 +/- acres in Baltimore City) is out for signatures. It was approved by the Board of Public Work on April 27, 2022, and will be in the land records in May. It is co-held with Baltimore Green Space.
- Ms. Carlson noted that MET Easement Staff has twenty-two active projects in the pipeline. Staff has recently been to Frederick, Baltimore, and Prince George's Counties.

**Consent Agenda**

The following properties were approved at the April 20th Lands Committee meeting and forwarded for presentation to the Board for approval.

- Recommendation to approve new easement on 85.17 +/- ac in Garrett County, from Martin Trust

- Recommendation to approve new easement on 152 +/- ac in Anne Arundel County co-held with Scenic Rivers Land Trust, from Anne Arundel County Govt.
- Recommendation to approve new easement on 84.26 +/- ac in Garrett County, from Scheig Trusts
- Request to approve temporary commercial activities on 116- acre MET easement property in Allegany County (MET easement file -0033MIL79.ALLE)
- Request to approve amendment of MET easement on 48.96 acres in Baltimore County, co-held with Land Preservation Trust (MET easement file -- 0724DON02.BACO)
- Request to approve amendment of MET easement on 212.78 acres in Dorchester County, co-held with Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (MET easement file -- 0935HAL07.DORC)

**Vice Chair Burnett asked for a motion to approve the consent calendar. Ms. Jitkoff motioned, and Mr. Hoffmann seconded the motion. Mr. Prevas abstained from voting on the matter as he did not have time to research the consent agenda. All others voted in favor of approving the consent agenda with no further discussion.**

- Mr. Chapman recognized himself, Ms. Markline, Ms. Foster, Ms. Taylor (not present), Ms. Grafton and Mr. Honcharik (not present) for their outstanding efforts in surpassing the monitoring goals. He stated that this was made possible by a combination of in-person site visits, remote LENS monitoring and the cooperation from our land trust partners.
- Mr. Chapman apprised the Board that MET is working on a new GIS based data capture system to replace the current one.

#### **D. Outreach**

Nothing to report.

#### **Sub-Committees**

- **Land Trust Advisory**
  - Four land trusts renewed their cooperative agreements.
  - The Land Trust Assistance Program staff have been reviewing and processing monitoring reports submitted by land trusts partners

- Staff from MET, Lower Shore Land Trust and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy presented at MET's roundtable event on February 15, 2022. The topic revolved around remote monitoring. ESLC demonstrated the usage of their drone.
- Mr. Bowen mentioned the recent communication publishings by MET and encouraged attendees to contact Michelle Grafton at [michelle.grafton@maryland.gov](mailto:michelle.grafton@maryland.gov) if they are not receiving these publications.
- Mr. Bowen mentioned that Ms. Grafton and Mr. Turgeon continue to actively serve on Forever Maryland's Land Conservation Conference Planning Committee.

- **Legislative**

- Mr. Hoffman reported that the Conservation Finance Act (HB0653 SB0348), concerning ecosystem services projects on MET easement properties, passed in both chambers.
- Mr. Hoffman reported that two other bills that mentioned MET did not pass.
  - (HB1031 SB0791) Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)
  - (SB0998) Maryland Environmental Trust - Trustees - Alterations

- **Grants**

- John Turgeon and Kelly Price are working together with the Maryland Department of Transportation to fund the Keep Maryland Beautiful Grant Program for an additional five-year term.
- There was a brief discussion on how the funds are organized and awarded and distributed.
- Mr. Turgeon noted that Wendy Stringfellow of Forever Maryland indicated that the Maryland Department of the Environment has shown interest in Forever Maryland.
- Mr. Burnett suggested that MET should seek out partners for more funding sources that are consistent with DNR's mission.



- Mr. Hager indicated that there are other funding sources available aside from grants.

- **Agriculture**

- Nothing to report.

**VI. Other Business**

Mr. Hager stated that he was happy to see the meetings back to an in-person format. He stated that great work continues to be done by the MET Board and staff. He congratulated Mr. Bowen on his appointment to the Board Chair position. He said that he was happy to see new members coming into the organization.

**VII. Adjourn Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.