

Maryland Environmental Trust
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2019

Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) Board of Trustees (“Board”) Mary Burke called the meeting to order at 4:14 p.m. at 100 Community Place, Crownsville, Maryland 21032. Trustees in attendance were Mary Burke, Phil Hager, Major Gary Burnett, Tom McCarthy, Royden Powell, David Greene, Mark Hoffman, and Sarah Taylor-Rogers. MET staff in attendance were: Bill Leahy, John Turgeon, Jon Chapman, Michelle Grafton and Kelly Price. Senator Addie Eckardt attended the meeting via conference line. The Board did receive sign proxies from Toby Lloyd and Julia Jitkoff. Ted Sudol, the consultant with Carter, participated in the meeting to give an update regarding the Forever Maryland Foundation. Roger Medoff, from the Office of the Attorney General, also joined the board meeting with information pertaining to the James Run Easement.

I. **Call to order**

II. **Other Business**

Ms. Burke requested from the Board for a change in the agenda for the Board Meeting, due to other parties relating to the James Run Easement being present in the room. Director Leahy left the room for the discussion of James Run Easement and also for the Forever Maryland Foundation.

Mr. Powell introduced the James Run Easement and gave general background information to the Board, advising them this property was donated to Maryland Environmental Trust by the Maryland Transportation Authority. He also stated the property is approximately 18 acres and runs along Interstate I-95 into Harford County. This project has been approved in the past but never fully executed. The new builders would like to allow for a utility easement to run through the property as previously. The findings of facts are located in the Board packet for all Trustees to review. Mr. Powell advised the Board that the project needs to be considered for approval today.

Mr. Chapman expressed to the Board that Harford County has strong support for this project, indicating that it would benefit the public and that it would also save Harford County money. Mr. Chapman stated that the project would consist of a sewer line that would run through the easement, which is mainly forest.

There were concerns from some Board members regarding the upkeep and the damage that would be done to the easement if this project was allowed. Ms. Burke asked if the new amendment has met the LTA's principles, and Mr. Chapman stated that it did meet them. Mr. Medoff spoke briefly regarding the MET policy for impermissible private benefit and the focus on the property owner. There was a brief discussion on reduction and risk and the Board made suggestions on what the owners of the property need to do to have the Board approve the request.

Mr. Powell moves to approve the amendment.

Mr. McCarthy seconds.

Mr. Medoff withdraws the approval stating that any revisions to the property need to be brought forth to the Board today for approval. The MOU regarding conservation values must state that the owner of the property is responsible for putting a fence up, all maintenance and operations, that all conservation values are maintained adequately into the future, and that the owners must restore any damage done with work vehicles to pre-activity conditions.

Ms. Burke made the motion to approve the amendments.

All in favor.

Mr. Sudol presented an update on the Forever Maryland project.

Mr. Sudol advised the Board that he has not been able to meet with all the Board Members that were previously selected for the Forever Maryland Foundation. He would like to put new people on the Board and report back to MET and the State Ethics Commission.

Mr. Sudol recently met with Jennifer Algair from the State Ethics Commission and had a positive meeting. Mr. Sudol thinks this project will have an additional 90-day timeline to it and would like to see the launch date in May.

Ms. Rogers motioned to extend the contract with Carter for an additional 90-days.

Mr. Powell seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Director Leahy re-enters the room.

III. Board Work Plan & Governance Topics

A. Adopting the Minutes

Ms. Burke moved for approval of the minutes for the December 11 Board Meeting. Ms. Jitkoff requested one correction on the language for the Finance Committee to change the amount of funds coming from the reserve account from \$30,000 to \$120,000. Mr. Powell motioned to accept the minutes subject to the change proposed. Ms. Rogers seconded the motion. All approved.

Ms. Burke asked to have Ms. Grafton speak next so that she can recommend Board approval of two Cooperative Agreements, one with the Charles Koiner Farm and the other with the North American Land Trust. Ms. Grafton presented to the Board background information regarding these two Cooperative Agreements. All documents are outlined in the Board packets, and all materials submitted were approved.

Mr. McCarthy motioned for the approval.

Mr. Hager seconded the motion.

All in favor.

B. Chairwoman Report

Ms. Burke spoke briefly about Mike Pretl's passing and requested flowers and a donation from MET in honor of him. Director Leahy mentioned that the MET newsletter would have information about him and it will state where donations can be sent.

Ms. Burke suggested to the Board that they go back and look at the previous list that was sent out last year to the Governor, the Senate, and the House, with names on it for new Board members. They need to review the list to see if anyone else would be a good fit considering the list would still be live. In the meantime, Mr. Lloyd will be taking over the Governance Committee until a replacement has been found. Ms. Rogers has offered to serve on the Committee as well.

Mr. Greene recommended that the Chair of the Governance Committee also serve on the Executive Committee.

Ms. Burke addressed the Board about having more outreach in the communities. She mentioned a meeting that she and Bill had with the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. Ms. Burke this would be an excellent way to get more involved with the youth of Baltimore. Director Leahy will follow up with the Bishop.

Ms. Burke also suggested that the Maryland Climate Academy, a climate change organization that trains and certifies government employees on climate control and the solutions, is an organization she hopes MET to get involved with through the annual conference in the future, both as a participant and as a sponsor.

Ms. Burke advised the Board that MET staff is doing interviews with local land trusts in Maryland, and connecting with local land trusts is another good way for the Board to connect with others and participate in outreach.

Ms. Burke addressed the Board on the “transfer tax” legislation that Senator Jennings’s office is wanting. She also discussed the IRS’s effort to limit federal deductions for conservation easements where a state tax credit was granted. This will have an impact on charitable contributions as well, if it were to be adopted.

Director Leahy advised the Board that he will follow with Senator Jennings office on his proposed legislation.

C. Director’s Report

Director Leahy advised the Board to look over the MET Dashboard that was presented at the Board meeting, along with the memo that he wrote. Wendy Stringfellow will be releasing the calendar year end dashboard report soon.

Director Leahy announced that there would be an invasive species training on February 12 in the MHT conference room and asked that any Board members interested to please let the staff know so they can be added to the list.

Director Leahy spoke about MET having a Volunteer Appreciation Event on May 4th, and he solicited Board members to attend the event and consider help with donations of certain gifts for the volunteers, such as water bottles, hats, and other mementos to honor their work.

Director Leahy gave an update on the last roundtable, held on January 25. This was an event that was presented by Spitfire, a national communications company contracted by the Conservation Partnership, working with nonprofits and foundations, on the newly developed communications

and messaging framework. The next roundtable will be on February 19, with Chesapeake Conservancy presenting a new aerial monitoring tool set to interested land trusts in Maryland.

Director Leahy updated the Board on MET's annual conference and summit. The goal is to foster dialogue and collaboration around landscape conservation challenges. Director Leahy has an upcoming meeting with DNR in Rural Legacy and MALPF to invite their engagement. Day 2 of the conference will feature a policy summit aimed at legislative officials and local electeds.

Director Leahy closed his report by turning the meeting over to Mr. Turgeon. Mr. Turgeon did a presentation on the Charles Koiner Farm, a property on which MET is considering a proposed easement donation.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Governance & Nominating

Nothing more to add to Governance and Nominating report.

B. Finance

Mr. Burnett reported for Ms. Jitkoff on the finance committee. He advised that donations are higher previous months due to more substantial donations/contributions being made in November and December.

C. Easements & Stewardship Committee

Mr. Powell mentioned to the Board that the easement and stewardship committee did meet and they need approval from the Board for the items on the consent calendar.

- a) Edwin and Marian Fry, 191.668 acres, Kent County w/ Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Inc.
- b) Still Pond Preserve, LLC, 155.04 acres, Kent County w/ Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Inc.
- c) Langford West, LLC, 304.598 acres, Kent County w/ Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Inc.
- d) Shell Point Farm & Forest, LLC, 74.64 acres, Kent County, w/ Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Inc.
- e) Nichols Family Limited Partnership, 221.0326 acres, Worcester County w/ Lower Shore Land Trust, Inc.

f) The Nature Conservancy, 65.736 acres, Calvert County w/
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, Inc., and the US Dept. of the Navy
(REPI program)

Mr. Powell motioned for approval.

Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion.

All in favor.

D. Agriculture Committee

Mr. Greene stated that he reviewed the proposed MET easement language regarding soil conservation and water quality plans, and he was sending said language to the Easement and Stewardship Committee for approval. This then would be submitted directly to the Board.

Mr. Greene suggested that the Agriculture Committee monthly meeting be moved to start at 2 pm rather than 3 pm, so that it will not conflict with the Executive Committee meeting, on which a number of Agriculture Committee members sit.

E. Land Trust Advisory Committee

Mr. Hager requested participation from all Board members attending the Annual Conference on May 16 & 17. He also asked for an additional \$2500 from the Board members to help total the \$5000 that they are requesting in sponsorship money.

F. Grants Committee

Mr. Burnett reported on the Keep Maryland Beautiful grant with a total of \$215,505. He advised the list of the recipients has been handed out. The Board needs to approve the grants that have been approved by the committee.

Mr. McCarthy motioned for approval of the KMB grants.

Ms. Roger's seconded the motion.

All in favor.

G. Legislative Committee

Nothing to report.

V. **Adjourn Meeting**

Mr. McCarthy motioned for adjournment.

Ms. Burke closed the meeting at 6:11 pm.