

Maryland Environmental Trust
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2017

Maryland Environmental Trust (“MET”) Board of Trustees (“Board”) Chair James W. Constable called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. at 100 Community Place, Crownsville, Maryland 21032. Trustees in attendance were James Constable, Jay Plager, Tom McCarthy, Doris Blazek-White, Royden Powell III, Julia Jitkoff, Toby Lloyd, Sarah Taylor-Rogers, Phil Hager, Addie Eckardt, Gary Burnett and Michael Pretl. MET staff Bill Leahy, John Turgeon, Tanya Mekeal, Wendy Hershey and Mona Rudnicki (departed early) attended.

Absent: David Green, Richard D’Amato, Goodloe Byron, Dana Stein, and Mary Burke.

I. Board Work Plan & Governance Topics

A. June 5, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes: *Mr. Hager moved approval of the minutes, Ms. Blazek-White seconded and MET Board unanimously approved and adopted June 5, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes*

B. Chairman’s Report: Mr. Constable reported on the kick off meeting of the Planning and Implementation Committee (“PIC”) for Forever Maryland Foundation (‘FMF’). There will be a series of meetings through the end of 2017 focused on planning for the startup and launch of FMF. Updates about the PIC’s discussion will be shared with MET board. MET will continue to offer financial support for the committee during the planning period. In addition, the Finance Committee will discuss preliminary funding plans and strategies, including amounts, timing and conditions to present to the MET Executive Committee and Board for approval. Sources of funds may be outside donations, anticipated proceeds from sale of fee lands and the Merriman estate gift.

Mr. Constable announced the pending appointment of an interim Board of Maryland Land Conservation Foundation. The new Board will be Connie Leider, Jim O’Connell and Doris Blazek-White. The interim Board will serve until FMF becomes a reality at which time an initial Board of the new FMF will be appointed.

Ms. Jitkoff asked about the purpose and what was covered at the meeting. Mr. Leahy reported that this was a kick-off meeting for the PIC. Members were asked to introduce themselves and their interest in serving on the committee. Members of the PIC received a presentation from Mr. Leahy to provide them the background and context for MET’s new strategic plan, why FMF was an important component, and how Maryland DNR is supporting these efforts. This stimulated a dialogue and conversation with each member of the PIC offering preliminary perspectives and thoughts about the possible focus and nature of FMF.

Mr. Leahy reported that after the meeting, the PIC members have received follow-up calls and were sent assignments in preparation for the next meetings. The focus of their first phase of work is to develop the best ideas about the unique and distinctive role of FMF and how together MET and FMF can best achieve our new strategic vision through FMF.

Mr. Plager asked what materials have been given to the MET BOT. Mr. Leahy said that the MET BOT will be given access to the PIC documents on line and a copy of the PowerPoint that he presented at that first PIC meeting will be distributed.

C. Director's Report : Mr. Leahy reported on the status of MET and what has been going on since the Board's last meeting. Mr. Leahy highlighted the good progress MET is making towards its strategic vision, in particular, steps we are taking to strengthen local land trusts and increase stewardship. He discussed the positive meetings he has had with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of DNR and their enthusiasm for MET's being positioned as the go-to organization for easement stewardship in Maryland. Mr. Leahy reported on the status of the LOCATE database project and the "go live", which is expected to happen in the next two weeks. He wants to work on refining and streamlining MET's internal process for Stewardship. MET Staff have been working on the signature landscapes initiatives. Staff will be working with the firm; Nature Serve; to develop an online mapping tool to assist with this effort. Staff is also working with consultant Don Owen on our project for consolidating land trusts' records in central/western Maryland Frederick County.

Mr. Leahy introduced Wendy Hershey the Land Conservation Liaison "(LCL)" to DNR and stated that Wendy is working on developing potential internship opportunities focusing on diverse needs of MET including records management, State mapping, and research.

Mr. Hager asked if the staff could provide the contact information for the Secretary of DNR so that Board members may contact him regarding their appreciation for the help and work they have done to help MET. Ms. Mekeal will provide the BOT contact info for the Secretary of DNR.

Mr. Leahy spoke about the October 12 , noon Governor's Reception date and time and purpose of the event.

Mr. Leahy highlighted the KMB partnership with DHCD and work that is being done in the City of Baltimore and showed a t-shirt that was produced for an initiative in Baltimore City. Mr. Leahy stated that MET was growing and so were its partnerships. Mr. Leahy reported on the increase in the 2018 grant funds for KMB SHA/MDoT MOU to \$50k.

D. Forever Maryland update : Mr. Leahy did not report on this as he and Mr. Constable spoke about the PIC and FMF when Mr. Constable gave his Chairman's report.

II. Committee Reports

A. Governance Committee & Nominating Subcommittee

Mr. Plager reported in Mr. Greene's absence that the Governance Committee will be meeting in the near future to review its plans and priorities for the year. He reminded the BOT about SB4 and the number of trustees that the board must select from the three policy bodies: House, Senate and the Governor. Mr. Plager also advised the board that we want to get names and suggestions to the three bodies as soon as possible before the legislative session. A priority for the Governance Committee will be working on developing succession plans and identifying new officers for May 2018 elections.

Ms. Jitkoff asked about the Bylaws for both MET and MLCF and if they will be revised. Mr. Plager stated he believed the MET bylaws had been recently updated and if there is a need they will be revised. MLCF bylaws will be re-visited once a clearer picture of FMF's core mission and strategies emerge.

Ms. Taylor-Rogers asked the status of the names that were submitted to the Governor's office last spring. Mr. Leahy stated that none of the names submitted were accepted and he was working on getting new names and again asked all board members to submit their suggestions.

Ms. Jitkoff asked why the Governor did not agree to any of the names on the list. Mr. Leahy said he was not sure why the names were rejected, but with Wendy Hershey's help he was continuing to work with the Governor's office on developing new prospects for the Governor's approval.

B. Finance Committee:

Private Side Budget update Ms. Blazek-White reviewed the Statement of Activities, Actual vs. Budget. MET exceeds budget by only a modest amount for a few items, but she sees no reason for concern. Ms. Blazek White noted that Stewardship did a great deal of work but did not require a great deal of funds, therefore the year end totals show that only a modest amount was spent from the Stewardship budget. She further commented that MET over spent on line item 8560 for bookkeeping because of the transition from the old bookkeeper to Ms. Rudnicki, and it is taking more time to track due to the additional grants that MET has received

Ms. Rudnicki reported that the general operations of MET are more extensive now, and the day- to- day operations are what is increasing this line item. Ms. Blazek-White feels this is money well spent.

Another significant expense for the year was for our consultants who implemented the feasibility study for FMF. While our expenses overall exceeded budget, this difference is easily covered when we make our annual transfer of funds from the Dillon endowment fund.

Ms. Rudnicki also noted that the documents on the table that Ms. Blazek-White is referring to do not show investment income; Ms. Blazek-White stated that we do track those investments.

Ms. Jitkoff asked about the return on investments, and Mr. Constable stated “it’s about 2.5 % across all investments.” This reflects our conservative investment policies for managing our funds.

Mr. Hager commented that he appreciated the comprehensive nature of the finance report.

Mr. Plager wanted to clarify that the name ‘private funds’ is not the most descriptive name as not all the funds under direct MET management are private, some of them are also state funds. He noted, for example, that MET Administered funds include the Rural Legacy (State)funds.

Ms. Rudnicki departed.

C. Easements & Stewardship Committee

1. Committee Report: Mr. Turgeon reported that the meeting on August 30th was very productive. The committee reviewed the list of active easement projects and is looking to do 15-16 new easements before the end of the 2017 calendar year. Mr. Turgeon reported that the easement staff has closed on and recorded 680 acres this calendar year so far, and the program is expecting to increase the total acres by an additional 1500 acres.

2. Approval of Consent Agenda: *Mr. McCarthy moved approval of the easement consent agenda, Ms. Eckardt seconded and the Board approved the easement consent agenda.*

- Gannon Family LLC, 229 ac, Talbot County, Easement Donation w/ Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Inc.
- Douglas C. Favorite and Donald E. Keeney, Jr., 42.8 ac, Frederick County, Easement Donation
- Joshua S. Brumfield, Trustee of the Joshua S. Brumfield Revocable Trust and Mary McBurney Swann Trustee of the Mary McBurney Swann Revocable Trust, 52.75 acres, Baltimore County, Easement Donation w/ The Manor Conservancy, Inc.
- Jean R. Worthley, LLC, 18.45 ac, Baltimore County, Easement Donation w/ Land Preservation Trust, Inc. (revised)
- Chateau Bu-De II, LLC, 348 ac, Cecil County, Easement Donation w/ Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Inc. (revised)
- Michael D. Hankin & Ann D. Hankin, 149 ac, Baltimore County,
Amended and Restated Deed of Conservation Easement w/Land Preservation Trust, Inc. (amendment and restatement)

Ms. Jitkoff thanked the easement staff for their hard work and said the staff's

memos were very thorough and efficient and that they considered all issues before bringing recommendations to the committee and the BOT.

D. Agriculture Committee: Mr. Turgeon reported in Mr. Greene's absence

about the presentation that he and Mr. Leahy gave to the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission ("SMADC") and how this group was very receptive to MET and its ideas regarding regional conservation partnerships. Mr. Turgeon said that the committee is looking to have Terron Hillsman, state conservationist for NRCS, come to the next agriculture meeting to brief the committee and discuss the possibility of making a presentation to the full board. The committee discussed the issue of renewable energy facilities on conserved lands and sponsoring tours of easement properties with FMF. Mr. Turgeon announced that Mr. Lloyd will be writing a series of articles for upcoming MET newsletters.

Ms. Jitkoff asked about SHA paying farmers to get on the ground conservation

restoration projects. Mr. Powell spoke about another issue which is working with soil conservation districts.

E. Land Trust Assistance Committee: Mr. Hager asked members of the

Board to go to the land tab on the MET web site – He gave dates and titles of the upcoming roundtables and training that Land Trust Alliance ("LTA") has available. Mr. Hager announced that MET will host its annual conference on May 17 and 18, 2018 in


Linthicum. He reported that the revenue from the conference this year was \$2,500 over expense and thanked Michelle Grafton for her role in the conference. This year, over 120 people from 64 organizations attended and/or presented. Mr. Hager reported that MET received \$11,815 in sponsorship from 16 sponsors. Mr. Hager named and thanked all the following sponsors:

- List of sponsors: In no particular order: Civil War Trust; Maryland Historical Trust; O'Donoghue & O'Donoghue LLP; The Conservation Fund; The Nature Conservancy; The Trust for Public Land; GreenVest, LLC; Green Trust Alliance; Wright, Constable & Skeen, LLP; Appalachian Trail Conservancy; Brown Advisory; Chesapeake Conservancy; Land Trust Alliance, S. H. Muller & Associates, LLC and L'Aiglon

F. Legislative Committee – Mr. Hager reported on the bills introduced last session. He said that the chair Kumar Barve initially had stated that he was going to put together a summer session on siting wind and solar on public lands including eased lands. Mr. Hager reported that as of today there had not been any meetings. Mr. Hager brought up another issue that may be of interest-- agro-tourism and agro-tainment. He spoke about some activities that are commercial and the need to be careful on how we work with these situations as people and other groups may use our approvals as a precedent to get zoning changed.

III. Adjourn: The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


James W. Constable
Chair

These minutes were approved/revised by the Board of Trustees on October 2, 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.