

**Maryland Environmental Trust**  
**Board of Trustees Open Meeting Minutes**  
**September 13, 2021**

Trustees Present:

Mary Burke, Chair  
Gary Burnett, Vice Chair  
Julia Jitkoff, Treasurer  
Megan D'Arcy, Secretary  
Megan Benjamin  
Diana Conway  
Toby Lloyd  
Mark Hoffman  
Greg Bowen  
Senator Adelaide Eckardt (Senate President's representative)  
Delegate Jim Gilchrist (House Speaker's representative)  
Tom McCarthy (Governor's representative)  
Susanne Richards

Trustees Absent:

Ken Montague  
Tom Prevas  
Lori Lynch

Others Present:

John Turgeon, Director, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)  
Wendy Foster, MET staff  
Josette Markline, MET staff  
Kelly Price, MET staff  
Ann Carlson, MET staff  
Jon Chapman, MET staff  
Michelle Grafton, MET staff  
Talley Kovacs, Asst. Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General  
Phil Hager, Asst. Secretary for Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

**I. Call to Order**

Board Chair Mary Burke called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

## II. Board Work Plan & Governance Topics

### A. Adopting the Minutes

Ms. Burke asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2021, MET Board meeting. Mr. Hoffman motioned to approve the above minutes; Mr. Lloyd seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### B. Present Governor citation to former MET Trustee Dr. Sarah Taylor-Rogers

Ms. Burke recognized that the spouse of the late Dr. Taylor-Rogers, John Whitson Rogers, was not in attendance to receive the gubernatorial citation honoring Dr. Taylor-Rogers' life and service to Maryland. Ms. Burke talked of Dr. Taylor-Rogers' career at the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources, where she served as Secretary, and how she was a valued member of MET's Board of Trustees. She asked that the Board honor Dr. Taylor-Rogers in the meeting minutes. MET staff will have the citation mailed to her spouse. Mr. Bowen motioned for the Board to honor and give tribute to Dr. Sarah Taylor-Rogers. Mr. Hoffman seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### C. Presentation on the Indigenous cultural landscapes of Maryland

Ms. Burke introduced Dr. Julia King, Professor of Anthropology at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Dr. King provided an in-depth presentation on the Indigenous cultural landscapes of the Chesapeake Bay region, with particular emphasis on the Piscataway nation in southern Maryland. There was discussion after the presentation about how the information presented would be helpful to MET's and the DNR's land conservation efforts. Mr. Turgeon indicated that the information presented regarding the Piscataway would also be of great interest to the recently formed Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance, with which MET participates. Ms. Burke suggested that MET's Outreach Committee of the Board connect with the State's Commission on Indian Affairs.

### D. Chair Report

Board Chair Ms. Burke discussed the following topics:

- The Forever Maryland Foundation materials that were included in the Board meeting packet will be voted on at the November 1st Board meeting.
- The Governance and Legislative committees of the board are working on drafting proposed legislation for the 2022 session to simplify the trustee selection process.
- MET's current strategic plan ends in 2022. An RFP was released for a strategic planning consultant to assist MET in developing its next five-year strategic plan, which would include a board retreat in the winter or spring upcoming. Proposals will likely be

submitted by the end of September or beginning of October. An ad hoc strategic planning committee had been formed previously and consists of trustees Ms. Conway, Ms. Richards, Mr. Burnett, and Ms. Burke.

- The launch event for the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance took place last week at Serenity Farm in Charles County. Ms. Burke thanked trustee Mr. Bowen for his efforts in coordinating the event.
- Forever Maryland Foundation's annual report was shared in the board packet, and the organization's next board meeting is September 14th. Forever Maryland recently launched a membership drive and MET has joined. Forever Maryland is focusing their efforts on sustaining and growing their finances.
- The annual Land Trust Alliance Rally conference is being held virtually this year. The conference is taking place from October 5th through October 7th.

### **III. Director's Report**

MET Director Mr. Turgeon reported to the board on the following matters:

- He and Mr. Bowen coordinated the efforts to launch the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance for the five-county southern Maryland region. There were approximately 30-40 people that had attended the event at Serenity Farm. He and Mr. Bowen gave a brief overview of the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance and the purpose for establishing this group.
- For the fiscal year 2021, MET's easement stewardship program completed a total of 799 monitoring visits or aerial image reviews of easement properties, which is just over 60% of 1,300 property interests subject to MET easements. The use of the Lens aerial image review tool was of great assistance in this impressive accomplishment.
- In July, Cindy Hoffman started work as MET's new Records and Technology Manager, a position formerly held by Michelle Funches. She is responsible for formulating and implementing policies and procedures for managing all MET's records, both paper and digital, as well as managing MET's technology needs.
- Beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Keep Maryland Beautiful grants program will begin accepting applications for the 2022 grant round. Total funding from the grant program partners has increased somewhat over last year, from \$312,500 to \$320,000.

### **IV. Committee Reports**

#### **A. Governance Committee**

Committee chair Mr. Lloyd reported on the following items:

- There are two candidates for Board member positions and also gave a brief overview of what was expected of the new Board members.

- Nathan Volke was recommended by the Governor to be an MET Trustee. Mr. Lloyd had a prior conversation with Mr. Volke regarding his interest in being a trustee. Mr. Bowen motioned to approve the Governor's recommendation of Nathan Volke. Senator Eckardt seconded the motion. There followed a discussion regarding Mr. Volke's nomination. Ms. Jitkoff asked whether the board had a clear idea of what Mr. Volke's level of interest in the board is. Assistant Secretary of DNR Mr. Hager responded that he believes Mr. Volke has a high level of interest in the board and that he has conservation goals that are consistent with MET's. All voted in favor.
- Lauren Parker was added to the list of recommended trustees that will be sent to the Governor and the leaders of both legislative branches. Ms. Richards asked if Ms. Parker can serve now as an advisor to the board. Ms. Jitkoff recommended asking Ms. Parker to serve on a board committee in an advisory role similar to others. Mr. Burnett motioned to add Ms. Parker to the list of recommended trustees and to have her serve as an advisor to a board committee. Mr. Hoffman seconded the motion. All voted in favor.
- The revisions to the board's bylaws are being reviewed by the committee. The final draft will be sent out to the board to review, with the hope that they can be voted on at the November 1st board meeting.

#### B. Finance Committee

Ms. Jitkoff gave a brief overview of when the finance committee met, and the topics discussed. Regarding MET's board managed funds, she reviewed the quarterly reports from Brown Advisory as well as the balance sheet and profit and loss statements that had previously been sent to the board. There were no questions from the board on these documents. She asked for a motion to approve the balance sheet and profit/loss statements. Mr. Burnett motioned for approval. Mr. Bowen seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Jitkoff also reported that in FY21 MET staff spent considerably less than what was budgeted for operations. The approved FY22 budget is a bit larger than the FY21 budget, but there are projected cost increases this year such as the board retreat and the new field data collection tool. An open discussion took place regarding ways to make the financial documents for the board managed funds easier to read for the trustees.

#### C. Lands Committee

Committee chair Mr. Burnett asked MET's Easement Program Manager Ms. Carlson to report on her activities. She discussed the following items:

- The Natural Resources Planner III (Easement Planner) position has been advertised. She requested that Board members share the advertisement with their networks for a wider broadcast.
- There are currently thirty new easement projects in various stages of activity.
- Ms. Carlson has been working with Ms. Hoffmann on organizing records for new easements in accordance with the MET's record retention schedule.
- Ms. Carlson asked for a motion to accept the Consent Agenda below:

a) Proposed grant of easement from MIV Real Estate LLC on 153+/- acres in Worcester County with Lower Shore Land Trust

b) Proposed grant of easement from Kirk Rieckhoff on 143+/- acres in St. Mary's County

Ms. Jitkoff motioned to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Lloyd seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Burnett asked Stewardship Program Manager Mr. Chapman to report on easement stewardship activities. He discussed the following topics:

- The board was provided an overview of the Lens aerial imagery project and how it has helped MET achieve its monitoring goals. Lower Shore Land Trust is also exploring the use of Lens.
- A new GIS based field data collection tool is being created for MET by the State's Dept. of Information Technology.
- MET is hosting a stewardship-themed roundtable educational session in November for our land trust partners.
- Mr. Chapman discussed the State Highway Administration's request in St. Mary's County to replace a bridge, and what impact it would have on a 0.055-acre portion of an MET easement. Mr. Bowen motioned to approve the request. Mr. Hoffman seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

D. Agriculture Committee

There was nothing to report.

E. Grants Committee

There was nothing to report

F. Legislative Committee

Committee chair Mr. Hoffman discussed a potential bill that may be submitted in the next legislative session regarding changes to the Land Trust Grant Fund statute.

G. Land Trust Advisory Committee

Committee chair Mr. Bowen advised the Board that the committee met on July 7, 2021. He said that no action was taken at the meeting. Ms. Grafton announced that details regarding the upcoming roundtable will be posted on the MET website.

V. Other Business

There was no other business to report.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.