

**Greenspace Equity Advisory Board - Introductory Meeting Minutes**  
**June 10, 2024, 1:00pm**

The second meeting of the Greenspace Equity Advisory Board (GEAB) was held via Google Meet on Monday, June 10, 2024. Margaret Lashar, the Local Grants Supervisor for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the Land Acquisition and Planning (LAP) unit called the meeting to order at 1:03pm. Ms. Lashar announced that the meeting is being recorded and asked if any of the members objected to being recorded. Hearing no objections, the meeting proceeded to the Agenda. Ms. Lashar noted that the Governor's Appointment Office is in the process of appointing a Chair for the Advisory Board, which will be announced shortly.

Ms. Lashar announced that the meeting is open to the public pursuant to the Open Meetings Act. The public may observe the meeting and, at the specified time on the agenda, the board will receive public comments if there is anyone present who wishes to speak.

Staff introduced themselves, followed by roll call of the members and the sector that they represent. The following members and staff were in attendance:

Greenspace Equity Advisory Board Members:

Robert (Bob) Branham – Calvert County (County Park and Recreation)  
Carolyn Muller – City of Gaithersburg (Municipal Park and Recreation)  
Katie Lautar – Baltimore Green Space (Land Trust)  
Mxali Davidson-Roberts (Resident)  
Suzanne Ludlow (Resident)  
Savannah Winston (Resident)  
Senator Karen Lewis Young (Senate)  
Yuri Borovsky (Resident)

Absent:

Delegate Jackie Addison (House of Delegates)  
Keith Colston (Maryland Environmental Trust)  
Mandela Echefu (Resident)

Staff:

Hillary Bell, DNR, LAP Director  
Carrie Lhotsky, DNR, LAP Associate Director of Grants, Easements, and Stewardship  
Margaret Lashar, DNR, LAP Local Grants Supervisor  
Michael McQuarrie, DNR, LAP Local Grants Administrator  
Kate Woods, DNR, LAP Local Grants Administrator  
Mariah Davis, DNR, Environmental Justice Officer

Other Attendees:

John Griffith  
Sarah Knebel  
Molly Donald  
Andrew Burgoyne  
Edward Cols

First order of business motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 11, 2024 meeting. Minutes from March 11, 2024 approved.

Second order of business was to present the Greenspace Equity Program Implementation Overview

Margaret Lashar presented, first introducing the grant application created by DNR, followed by going over the Green Space Equity data layer maps, then reviewing the draft grant proposal guidelines and finally going over the draft application scoring rubric and estimated application timelines.

Margaret Lashar presents the data layer maps for the Greenspace Equity Program.

Yuri Borovsky asks about his home being in two categories on the map. Yuri also asks for clarification on the “either or” portion of the application when it comes to underserved versus overburdened.

Margaret Lashar answers and clarifies that yes, applicants can qualify for the Greenspace Equity Grant if they are either underserved or overburdened but that applications that fall into both categories may be prioritized with an extra point once scoring metrics are decided by DNR.

Mxali Davidson-Roberts asks about the mapping and data layer in respect to municipal governments or an area like Baltimore City, stating that some areas may or may not qualify on the data layer and how exactly is this determined.

Margaret answers and says there is a provision in the legislation that looks at adjacency and in this example if the city actually owns the property that the parcel in question may serve residents on both sides of the street in which case they may be eligible. DNR will have to look at those on a case by case basis.

Mariah Davis, DNR’s Environmental Justice Coordinator, says it may be helpful to specify that in the solicitation those in the adjacent areas who are underserved or overburden areas are able to apply.

Margaret Lashar confirms this is in the document.

Margaret Lashar presents on the grant proposal guidelines.

Suzanne Ludlow asks about specific eligibility requirements for land trusts. Is it “recommended” or “required” that land trust co-hold the fee simple deed easement with the county or municipal government agency? Is this the case even when it is the county or the municipal government agency?

Margaret Lashar answers: Yes, when the land trust is the applicant. It is the land trust that would partner up with the government entity, not the other way around. If they're looking at potentially solely holding the acquisition in terms of fee simple or a perpetual conservation easement.

Yuri Borovsky asks how do we define a community gathering open space area, would a paved plaza technically qualify or are we implying it has to be green, such as a football field?

Margaret Lashar answers: It would depend on if you're talking about just an entire plaza that's paved, maybe not, we're looking at it more in terms of it as a passive park. If there's a little bit of concrete where you're setting up benches and things like that that may be fine, it might also be dependent on how you're holding title to the property.

Katie Lauter says I think maybe her microphone isn't working and types in the chat “the legislation does not require Land Trusts to co-hold with the municipality.”

Margaret Lashar answers and addresses this issue, Land Trusts are not required to co-hold with a municipality or local government entity but it is recommended.

Hilary Bell confirms it is a recommendation, not a requirement.

Mxali Davidson-Roberts asks about smaller organizations that are not a land trust or governmental organization and their eligibility.

Margaret Lashar answers that they would be eligible to partner with a land trust or governmental organization.

Margaret Lashar presents on the application and scoring rubric. As of now DNR has not decided on the point system yet but that will be coming in the future.

Suzanne Ludlow asks about scoring underserved versus overburdened and states she likes the idea of documenting which elements show overburdened or underserved.

Yuri Borovsky asks about considering health and livability in overburdened and underserved areas in scoring.

Margaret Lashar confirms we can look into those details more specifically if it comes down to choosing between two projects.

Kate Lauter says she thinks the application itself would benefit from a little bit more definition of the difference between stewardship and maintenance. There is a place in the application where you say stewardship is eligible for funding towards increasing conservation value but then you also say that maintenance is not eligible. I think that is going to be confusing to a public who maybe is interested in redoing the trails and their greenspace and it is going to involve just mostly physical labor that they are going to do themselves like vine removal.

Margaret Lashar responds saying DNR is still finalizing the terminology and suggests that if anyone has any suggestions in terms of verbiage, that would help clarify we definitely welcome that. In terms of how DNR looks at the stewardship aspect of it and again because this is a capital program, DNR is looking at more of the physical elements that would provide for that land not

necessarily the general invasive species removal that is done once a year. It is not that type of program in terms of stewardship funding.

Katie Lauter asks about documents that are required as part of the application.

Margaret Lashar respond, stating that in terms of the application, on that last page there is a checklist of attachments for land trusts, for example, if you were going to solely hold the deed or conservation easement, as Hilary said, we might just ask you to provide your Articles of Incorporation and something that suggests how the Land Trust's succession planning works. This is needed if for some reason the Land Trust is unable to continue with maintaining the project for the 15-year requirement and in terms of the development projects in perpetuity. There are three criteria for determining the eligible land trust, the required documents will be utilize to support the information that we're looking for to determine if the Land Trust application meets the requirements.

Sarah Knebel comments that she agrees with Katie that clarity on stewardship versus maintenance and that it might be helpful.

Sarah Knebel comments that it seems like the grant application requires ADA access for every single project and that might be difficult for forest patches that plan to have natural surface trails.

Margaret Lashar responds that yes, ADA access is required for this grant and that projects that DNR has previously funded have found creative solutions for making trails and natural surfaces ADA accessible.

Margaret Lashar reviews timelines for application.

Katie Lauter says she feels she needs more time to review these documents.

Margaret Lashar responds stating that the board is not going to approve or vote on these documents, that authority rests with DNR.

Suzanne Ludlow says she does not think we need another meeting though an opportunity to comment and get clarity on parts of the application would be helpful but that all of that can be taken care of over email.

John Griffith suggests having a folks to submit additional comments on the drafts via email.

Margaret Lashar agrees and sets the comment deadline as June 21, 2024.

Margaret Lashar asked if there are further comments or questions. Hearing no additional comments or questions, Ms. Lashar thanked the members of the GEAB and asked for a motion to adjourn. Keith Colston motioned to adjourn, second by Yuri Borovsky. Hearing no opposition to the motion, Ms. Lashar ended the meeting at 2:06pm.