

Maryland Environmental Trust
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2026

This meeting was held virtually via Google Meet at meet.google.com/ntq-bsxt-bzs and by telephone conference call at: 1-415-799-1181 PIN: 397-586-407#

Trustees Present:

Megan Benjamin (Chair)
Lori Lynch (Vice Chair)
Gary Burnett
Megan D'Arcy
Diana Conway
Keith Colston (Secretary)
Craig Highfield
Julia King (Treasurer)
Crystal Chissell
Hilary Bell (representing the Governor of Maryland who is an ex-officio trustee)
Delegate Natalie Ziegler (representing the Speaker of the House of Delegates who is an ex-officio trustee)

Trustees Absent:

Nathan Volke
Alice Chalmers

Others Present:

John Turgeon, Director, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET Staff)
Kelly Price (MET Staff)
Josette Markline (MET Staff)
Dan Skalos (MET Staff)
Kevin Bull (MET Staff)
Matt Ludington (MET Staff)
Cindy Hoffmann (MET Staff)
Cynthia McCann, Assistant Attorney General (Office of Attorney General)
Talley Kovacs, Assistant Attorney General, Senior Counsel (Office of Attorney General)

I. Call to Order

Chair Benjamin called the regular meeting of the MET Board of Trustees to order at 4:13 p.m.

II. Review Minutes of the May 4, 2026, Regular Meeting

Chair Benjamin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees held on May 4, 2026. Delegate Ziegler so moved; Ms. King seconded. All voted in favor and the minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Board Chair's Report

This was Ms. Benjamin's first meeting as Board Chair. She gave an overview of her history with MET. She recognized Mr. Charlie Wells, who started with MET as a volunteer, then transitioned to a member of the MET Advisory Council and served on the Board's Lands Committee for many years. Mr. Wells stepped down from these positions at the conclusion of last month's meetings.

Chair Benjamin made a motion to approve Toby Lloyd (former MET Trustee and Secretary of MET's Board) to become a member of the Advisory Council; seconded by Mr. Highfield. All voted in favor and it was unanimously passed that Mr. Lloyd become a member of the Advisory Council.

IV. Director's Report

Mr. Turgeon gave a brief overview of the status on the negotiations in the matter involving the two year Temporary Commercial Events Agreement with Irvine Nature Center (MET Easement #0525IRV00.BACO) designated for a closed session under Annotated Code of Maryland General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and § 3-305(b)(8) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.

At 4:22 p.m. Ms. D'Arcy motioned to move to a closed session in accordance with the statements above; Delegate Ziegler seconded. Chair Benjamin and Mr. Highfield abstained from voting, and recused themselves from participating in the closed session. All others voted in favor of a closed session.

Closed Session

The meeting was closed under the Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article, § 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and § 3-305(b)(8) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation. The topic discussed was the status of the Irvine Nature Center easement stewardship matter pursuant to the negotiations with the Irvine Nature Center regarding commercial activity on the Property. MET staff set up a separate Google Meet session where only MET Trustees, counsel and staff were in attendance.

Trustees present in the closed session were Lori Lynch, Gary Burnett, Megan D’Arcy, Diana Conway, Keith Colson, Julia King, Crystal Chissell, Hilary Bell and Natalie Ziegler. Mr. Volke and Ms. Chalmers were absent from the meeting and therefore did not participate in the closed session.

Staff present were John Turgeon, Kelly Price, Dan Skalos, Kevin Bull, Matt Ludington, and Josette Markline. Assistant Attorneys General Cynthia McCann and Talley Kovacs were also present.

At 5:06 pm on motion by Mr. Colston; seconded by Ms. D’Arcy, the Board unanimously adjourned the closed session and reconvened in open session.

Open Session

At 5:08 p.m. Ms. D’Arcy made a motion to re-open the meeting; seconded by Delegate Ziegler. All voted in favor of reopening the meeting.

Ms. D’Arcy indicated that legal counsel for Caves Valley Land Trust on this matter has changed, which caused a delay in negotiations. The plan is to reconvene at the September Board of Trustees meeting and continue discussions. No action was taken during the closed session.

V. Committee Reports

A. Lands Committee

Ms. Benjamin reported that the Lands Committee met on May 20, 2026 where the items on the Consent Agenda were proposed for Board approval.

Proposed new conservation easements:

- a. Donation of conservation easement to MET by Ty Clark and Jessica Cash-Clark – 167.8 acres in Garrett County

- b. Donation of conservation easement to MET and Catoctin Land Trust by Mountain Forest, LLC – 66.11 acres in Frederick County.
- c. Donation of conservation easement to MET and Catoctin Land Trust by Augusta Roswitha and Donald Dittberner – 64.65 acres in Frederick County.
- d. Donation of conservation easement to MET and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy by Tulip Forest Farming Corp. – 203 acres in Kent County
- e. Stewardship request for easement 0274FRO94.WASH
- f. Stewardship request for easement 0819WIL02.FRED

Ms. Benjamin asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda as stated above. Mr. Highfield so moved; Del. Ziegler seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Skalos reported that one additional easement will likely be recorded by the end of this fiscal year. That brings 11 new easements (totaling approximately 650 acres preserved) to MET's portfolio at the end of Fiscal Year 2026. He stated that 13 active projects (totaling 2,000 acres) are in various steps of processing, and there are 25 more in the potential stage.

Ms. Markline reported that staff has been monitoring in the field during the spring season and will soon transition to remote monitoring through the end of the fiscal year. She stated that there have been quite a few requests for approval received that meet the qualifications for approval by the MET Director. She indicated that there have also been some requests received regarding commercial use/activity on easements. MET is strategizing how to respond to these requests based on how commercial activity has been handled in the past, coupled with future policy revisions. She anticipates that policy revisions will be presented at the September meeting for approval.

Ms. Markline reported that MET hosted a roundtable event. Staff from many local land trusts and a few municipalities attended. The focus was on simplifying and strengthening processes while coordinating and collaborating with each other.

B. Land Trust Outreach Committee

Nothing to report.

C. Governance Committee

Mr. Turgeon reported on the recent vacancy of the Committee Chair. He indicated that efforts are ongoing to fill all vacant Board seats. He stated that the last meeting was held on May 12, 2026.

Mr. Turgeon asked for a motion to approve MET's Standing and Ad Hoc Committees FY 2027 membership list presented in the Board Packet with the following changes:

- **Add Del. Ziegler as Chair of the Governance Committee and remove her from the Lands Committee.**
- **Indicate that Keith Colston, Megan Benjamin, and Lori Lynch are Open Meetings Act designees.**

Delegate Ziegler so moved; Mr. Burnett seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Finance Committee

Ms. King pointed to the financial documents for the Board managed funds presented in the Board Packet. She stated that the Committee met on May 18, 2026 and reviewed the FY26 budget and expenditures. During that meeting the Committee also reviewed the FY27 budget for the Board managed funds. All financial documents were approved by the Committee to be presented to the Board for approval.

Ms. D'Arcy made a motion to approve the MET financial statements as posted in the Board Packet; seconded by Mr. Colston. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. King asked for a motion for approval of the FY27 Budget. Delegate Ziegler so moved; Mr. Burnett seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

E. Ad-hoc Committee Re: Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project

Nothing to report.

VI. Other Business

No other business was brought before the Board.

VII. Adjournment

Chair Benjamin asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Delegate Ziegler so moved; seconded by Ms. D'Arcy. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2026.