

Maryland Environmental Trust  
Board of Trustees Open Meeting Minutes  
February 3, 2025

**Trustees Present:**

Gary Burnett, Chair

Greg Bown, Vice Chair

Mark Hoffman, Treasurer

Thomas (Toby) Lloyd, Secretary

Megan D'Arcy

Lori Lynch

Keith Colston

Nathan Volke

Julia King

Diana Conway

Craig Highfield

Hillary Bell (representing the Governor of Maryland who is an ex-officio trustee)

Delegate Natalie Ziegler (representing the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates who is an ex-officio trustee)

**Trustees Absent:**

Megan Benjamin

Crystal Chissell

**Others Present:**

John Turgeon, Director, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET Staff)

Josette Markline (MET Staff)

Wendy Foster (MET Staff)

Cindy Hoffmann (MET Staff)

Kelly Price (MET Staff)

Matt Ludington (MET Staff)

Michelle Grafton (MET Staff)

Dan Skalos (MET Staff)

Kevin Bull (MET Staff)

Talley Kovacs, Assistant Attorney General (Office of Attorney General)

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Turgeon called the regular meeting of the MET Board of Trustees to order at 4:05 p.m.

**II. Minutes of the November 4, 2024 Regular Meeting**

**Mr. Turgeon asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees held on November 4, 2024. Ms. Lynch motioned to approve the minutes; Ms. D'Arcy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.**

There was a brief discussion surrounding the inclusion of details from last meeting's closed session. Ms. Kovacs stated that those details will not be posted publicly, however, MET is required to maintain a copy of the minutes from that portion of the meeting. The minutes were included, in their entirety, in the Board's meeting packet for final approval from the full Board. These minutes should not be shared publicly as they include confidential information. Mr. Colston stated that there is training pertaining to Maryland's Open Meeting Act. It is not mandatory but he encourages Trustees to take the training as it would strengthen the Board as a whole. More information about the Open Meetings Act and the training can be found on the Maryland Attorney General's website at these links: [MD Open Meetings Act Overview](#); [Open Meeting Act Training](#).

**III. Board Chair's Report**

Mr. Burnett arrived at the meeting. He reported that the filing deadline for the required Annual Financial Disclosure form with the State's Ethics Commission is April 30, 2025.

Chair Burnett reported that the KMB Technical Review Committee met in January and recommended approval of the KMB grant awards for FY25 as outlined in the memo submitted in the Board Packet, dated February 3, 2025 (Subject: Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) grant awards for FY 2025).

A brief discussion was held around the possibility of increasing funding from MET for the KMB program. Mr. Turgeon indicated that MET does a good job in trying to award the full amount of funds requested. Chair Burnett stated that an increase of funding would be considered in future discussions. Mr. Turgeon said that we would continue to seek additional funding from the State Budget for the program.

Awards will be publicly announced on March 20, 2025. **Until that time, awardee information is considered confidential and should not be distributed or discussed outside of the Board members.**

MET Trustee Mr. Bowen, who is also Executive Director of the American Chestnut Land Trust, recused himself from the meeting for this vote as his organization was recommended by the Committee as a grant recipient.

**Chair Burnett asked for a motion to approve the distribution of KMB grants as stated on the Memorandum submitted in the Board Packet. Mr. Hoffman approved the motion; Mr. Lloyd seconded. All voted in favor.**

Mr. Bowen returned to the meeting.

#### **IV. Director's Report**

A written Director's Report was not distributed for this meeting. Mr. Turgeon gave an update on the Easement Property that was discussed during the closed session of the last regular meeting. He reported that on January 17, 2025, a global settlement was reached among the parties. Mr. Turgeon stated that there is still work to be done. Mr. Turgeon thanked everyone involved, and specifically Ms. Kovacs and Ms. Katherine Bledsoe, for their dedication and hard work on this case.

Ms. Kovacs gave an overview of the next steps towards final remediation. She reported that the settlement requires MET to draft an Amendment to the original Deed of Conservation Easement containing the settlement terms. The Amendment will be recorded in the Land Records Office. Ms. Kovacs invited any Trustee interested in more details to contact her directly at [talley.kovacs@maryland.gov](mailto:talley.kovacs@maryland.gov).

#### **V. Committee Reports**

##### **A. Lands**

Mr. Turgeon reporting for absent Committee Chair Ms. Benjamin stated that the Lands Committee met in January. There are no items for the Board's approval at this time.

Ms. Markline reported on the various tasks that the Stewardship team has been working on since the last regular meeting.

- MET hosted the roundtable event mentioned at the last meeting. The topic was a rollout of the revised Cooperative Agreement and the new Easement Enforcement Policy. There was a collaborative discussion among the attendees about different ways to handle violations and how to coordinate working to resolve pending violations on co-held easements. The Easement Enforcement Policy will be forthcoming for approval.
- Continuing to conduct easement monitoring visits.

- Working on improving MET's Salesforce/Locate database to aid in tracking various administrative tasks (including but not limited to, fielding phone calls, corresponding with Landowners on enhancement projects, organizing potential violations and following up on them). Various spreadsheets are currently used to track the information. Salesforce/Locate will provide the ability to keep all of the data in one place, generate tasks, and run reports, while relating all of the data entries to a specific easement record.
- Drafting a general inquiry form that callers can complete online to help track and streamline the phone calls MET receives regarding easements (not all of which are conservation easements).
- Updating all of the easement boundary maps, using ArcGIS software.
- MET has again been selected by the Chesapeake Bay Trust to host a Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps Member.
- Working with the OAG on a dumping and other prohibited uses violation noted on an MET easement.

Mr. Skalos updated the Trustees on the work that the Easement team has been working on.

- Easement Pipeline:
  - Sixteen easement projects in various stages.
    - Nine projected to be recorded by the end of the FY25, or very early FY26, adding a little over 1,000 acres to MET's portfolio
    - Seven projected to close in the fall of 2026
  - Eleven potential projects, totaling approximately 1,000 acres
    - One Talbot County project, approximately 190 acres
    - A few potential projects in Baltimore County approximately 100 acres each.
    - One Baltimore County project (Humane Society of Baltimore County) approximately 365 acres. This will be a purchased easement with funding through Project Open Space. Mr. Turgeon noted that this project came to MET via the Governor's Office.

## **B. Land Trust Outreach**

Mr. Bowen reported that the Land Trust Outreach Committee did not meet in January. The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2025. Kristin Kirkwood, the new Chair of Forever Maryland, has been invited to attend.

Ms. Grafton thanked MET's co-holding partners for continuing to share monitoring reports with MET. Twelve partners have submitted reports for the second half of CY24.

She also noted that, thus far in FY24, MET has received over 600 monitoring reports from its partners.

### **C. Governance**

Mr. Lloyd reported that two candidates were recommended as Board Members by the Governance Committee.

- Alice Chalmers for full board membership.
- Matthew Johnson to be added to the potential board member list

Mr. Lloyd mentioned that the bios for Ms. Chalmers and Mr. Johnson were submitted in the Board Packet, prior to the meeting.

**Mr. Lloyd asked for a motion to approve Alice Chalmers for full board membership with MET. Mr. Bowen made the motion; Mr. Volke seconded. All voted in favor.**

**Mr. Lloyd asked for a motion to approve Matthew Johnson to be added to the board member recommendation list. Mr. Colston made the motion; Mr. Burnett seconded. All voted in favor.**

Mr. Lloyd noted that legislation calls for two MET Board Members to be on the Hart-Miller Island Oversight Committee. The Governance Committee will meet in the next two-three weeks to gather more information for presentation at a future meeting.

Mr. Lloyd reiterated the importance of Trustees completing the ethics training and submitting the financial disclosure form.

Mr. Turgeon reported that the Governor's Office recommended a few additional candidates, along with Ms. Chalmers, to be considered for full board members. Should other vacancies arise where recommendation by the Governor is required, MET may choose someone from the list already received.

### **D. Finance**

Mr. Hoffman called attention to the financial statements provided in the Board Packet. He pointed out that MET's net worth is approaching \$4,000,000. He also pointed out that MET was recently bequeathed \$53,545 to steward a particular Easement Property. The money has been placed in its own account as part of MET's portfolio. MET will assess the Property's needs.

Mr. Hoffman reported that MET has spent approximately \$32,000 (22 %) of the total board approved funds. It should be noted that the KMB grant numbers that were reported on by Chair Burnett have not been accounted for yet in that total.

**Mr. Hoffman asked for a motion to approve the financial reports, through the end of December, as submitted in the Board Packet. Mr. Lloyd approved; Mr. Colston seconded. All voted in favor.**

Following up on an earlier question, Mr. Hoffman stated that there is no direct relationship with MET's private side funds and the Maryland State Pension Fund. MET's private side fund is money provided for in state law and is managed by MET.

Mr. Hoffman reminded Trustees that, while MET dedicates funds from its private side budget towards the Keep Maryland Beautiful Grant Program, the primary purpose of that money is to support MET's core mission.

**E. Ad-hoc Committee (Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project)**

Chair Burnett stated the MET did submit a statement from the Board to the three MET easement landowners specifically impacted by the Project. The statement was also published in MET's newsletter. He reiterated that the Board's stance is to protect our easements as much as possible. Chair Burnett noted that the application has been submitted by PSEG to the Public Service Commission. He stated that we are in a "holding pattern" and that MET is in a good position. He confirmed that the Committee members are abreast of the topics and "have a good understanding of where we are".

**VI. Adjourn Meeting.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of several large, fluid loops and strokes, positioned above a horizontal line.

Gary Burnett, MET Board Chair

These minutes from the February 3, 2025 regular MET Board meeting were approved by the Board of Trustees on May 5, 2025.

*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.*