

**Maryland Environmental Trust
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2025**

This meeting was held in person at 100 Community Place Third Floor, Room 3.218 (MHT Boardroom) Crownsville, MD 21032,
and virtually via Google Meet at: meet.google.com/sze-ynpy-wdk,
and by telephone conference call at:
1-662-639-4221 PIN: 612 785 050#

Trustees Present:

Gary Burnett, Chair
Lori Lynch, Vice Chair
Thomas (Toby) Lloyd, Secretary
Mark Hoffman, Treasurer
Keith Colston
Julia King
Diana Conway
Megan Benjamin
Crystal Chissell
Megan D'Arcy
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:

Nathan Volke
Alice Chalmers

Others Present:

John Turgeon, Director, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET Staff)
Paul Peditto, Assistant Secretary of Land Resources (MD Department of Natural Resources)
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)

Cynthia McCann, Assistant Attorney General (Office of Attorney General)

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

Mandee Heintz

Tom Prevas

Kathy Pontone

I. Call to Order

Chair Burnett called the regular meeting of the MET Board of Trustees to order at 4:06 p.m.

II. Minutes of the May 5, 2025 Regular Meeting

Chair Burnett asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees held on May 5, 2025. Mr. Lloyd motioned to approve the minutes; Ms. Lynch seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Chair Burnett asked for a motion to change the order of the Agenda, moving Section V, Item 4 before Section V, Item number 3. The motion was moved by Mr. Hoffman and seconded by Ms. Conway. All voted in favor.

III. Board Chair's Report

Chair Burnett opened the floor for discussion on the nomination of David Satterfield from the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy to serve on the MET Advisory Council. There was no discussion.

Chair Burnett asked for a motion to approve David Satterfield to serve on MET's Advisory Council. Ms. Conway and seconded by Mr. Hoffman. All voted in favor.

Mr. Turgeon noted that Mr. Satterfield will serve on MET's Land Trust Outreach Committee, representing Forever Maryland.

Chair Burnett announced that the Board Meeting outing to be held at the Royce Hanson Conservation Park in Poolesville, MD will take place on Wednesday, June 25th at 10:00. The Park's Project Manager will be on-site to talk about the current and future state of the

project. Lunch will follow at a local restaurant. Further details will be forthcoming via email from Chair Burnett.

IV. Director's Report

Mr. Turgeon updated the Trustees on the recent projects that MET staff has been working on. He stated that MET expects this fiscal year will be another record year for easement monitoring reports completed. Mr. Turgeon informed the Trustees that, at the September regular meeting, he will review the FY25 Managing For Results (annual performance report) provided to DNR's Executive Staff and the Maryland Department of Budget and Management.

Mr. Turgeon thanked the dedicated MET staff for their hard work and also MET's legal counsel for providing tremendous support.

V. Committee Reports

A. Lands

Ms. Benjamin reported that the Committee met on May 21, 2025 to review the items on the Consent Agenda.

Consent agenda - Lands Committee recommendations to approve new conservation easements to MET.

- a. Stiles Colwill and Jonathan Gargiulo to MET, 117.51 acres in Baltimore County
- b. Stiles Colwill and Jonathan Gargiulo to MET, 8.1 acres in Baltimore County
- c. Eccleston Land Company to MET, 45 acres in Baltimore County

Approval of actions affecting existing MET easements.

- d. Request for modification to the Second Amendment and approval of an addition to and renovation of an historic protected residence (MET file #0797QUI04.ANNE).

Ms. Benjamin asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as stated above. Mr. Lloyd moved to approve it; Mr. Colston seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Skalos gave an update on the easement projects in progress and their status. Mr. Skalos reported that MET expects 13 easements, totaling about 1,300 acres, to be recorded by the end of FY26. There are a number of additional projects waiting to be started. He specifically called attention to one in Montgomery County. The 700-acre

Property is an old coal fire power plant, of which, about 200 acres are heavily industrialized. The owners have expressed interest in placing a conservation easement on the remaining acres and allowing access to the public.

Ms. Markline reported that Stewardship staff has been performing on-the-ground monitoring visits, catching up with new successor landowners, and checking on potential violations. Since the approval of MET's Easement Enforcement Policy, at the last meeting, staff have been working on putting together a summary of active violations and their status. Ms. Markline stated that they are pushing to get as many on-the-ground monitoring visits conducted as possible. She reported that she has been working with a contractor to assist in making the database more efficient in managing stewardship activities. She noted that the Stewardship Team will begin sending follow-up monitoring letters in the next few weeks.

Ms. Markline referred to Agenda Item 4 "Request for approval of activity on existing MET conservation easement 0458BLA98.KENT". This item was not placed on the original Consent Agenda as the information for the request was not received from the landowner in time to be presented at the recent Lands Committee. The request is in reference to planting a buffer along a waterway. Ms. Markline gave an overview of the request.

Chair Burnett moved to approve the planting of a buffer along the waterway on Easement 0458BLA98.KENT; Mr. Highfield seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Turgeon referred to Agenda Item 3 "Stewardship matter on existing MET conservation easement 0525IRV00.BACO". He noted that the Lands Committee considered this matter at its last meeting and recommended to the Board that it affirm staff's determination that the Irvine Nature Center ("Irvine") is in violation of its conservation easement. Since that meeting, MET has continued to review the following stewardship issues:

1. Wedding and event rentals on The Irvine Nature Center's property
2. Plans for construction of a building

Mr. Turgeon stated that this is a stewardship matter that is planned for the Board's discussion in a closed session with counsel.

He noted that MET had taken no formal action, and no violation notice had been sent to Irvine, and that discussions had taken place only among the staff and at the Lands Committee meeting.

Chair Burnett opened the floor to anyone who wished to speak on the matter.

Mandee Heint and Tom Prevas, legal counsel on behalf of the Irvine Nature Center (“Irvine”), presented Irvine’s views on why wedding and event rental activities are allowed under the conservation easement, and provided their interpretation of the easement’s terms.

Kathy Pontone, legal counsel for Caves Valley Land Trust, which co-holds the conservation easement with MET, was also present. She gave Caves Valley Land Trust’s perspective on why wedding and event rental activities on the property violate the easement’s terms as prohibited commercial activity.

Ms. Heint and Ms. Pontone answered questions posed by Ms. Conway.

Closed Session

At 4:50 p.m., Mr. Colston moved to go into a closed session, seconded by Ms. Lynch. All voted in favor. Megan Benjamin and Craig Highfield recused themselves from the 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. The topic discussed was the status of the Irvine stewardship matter and options moving forward in light of MET staff’s and the Lands Committee’s recommendations. MET staff set up a breakout session in Google Meet where only MET Trustees, counsel, and staff were in attendance.

Trustees present for the discussion were Gary Burnett, Board Chair, Mark Hoffman, Keith Colston, Hillary Bell, Crystal Chissell, Megan D’Arcy, Lori Lynch, Julia King, Toby Lloyd, Diana Conway, and Ex-Officio Trustee Del. Natalie Ziegler.

John Turgeon, MET Executive Director, Josette Markline, Stewardship Manager, Kevin Bull, Easement Stewardship Specialist, Dan Skalos, Conservation Easement Program Manager, Matt Luddington, Conservation Easement Planner, Cindy Hoffmann, Technology and Records Manager, Kelly Price, Administrative Director, Wendy Foster, Easement Monitoring Specialist, Michelle Grafton, Outreach and Engagement Program Manager; and Cynthia McCann and Talley Kovacs, Assistant Attorneys General, were also in attendance..

At 5:42 p.m., on motion by Del. Ziegler, seconded by Mr. Colston, the Board members in attendance unanimously adjourned the closed session and reconvened in open session.

Open Session:

Chair Burnett stated that during the closed session, the Board discussed where the Irvine stewardship matter was in the process and potentially how it wanted to move forward, and he reiterated that no decisions were made. He offered the opportunity for the Board to ask questions or address anything else on the matter. No further discussion ensued.

Chair Burnett moved to take legal counsel's advice and to delegate to the Executive Director and staff of MET to work with Irvine Nature Center and Caves Valley Trust to discuss the potential easement violation and whether an agreement could be reached to move the stewardship matter forward, and to have the Director provide a review of those discussions at the next Board meeting on September 8, 2025, when the Board would have further discussion. Delegate Ziegler seconded. All voted in favor, except for Megan Benjamin and Craig Highfield who abstained.

B. Land Trust Outreach

Ms. Grafton reported that staff is wrapping up fiscal year end projects and organizing beginning similar projects for the next fiscal year. Some of these projects are communications, land trust assistance and education, working with our partners on reviewing and submitting co-held monitoring reports, and addressing issues as a result of those. Ms. Grafton reported that 559 co-held reports have been reviewed and processed for calendar year 2024. Starting in July, MET will begin reviewing and processing co-held monitoring reports conducted during the first half of calendar year 2025.

Ms. Grafton noted that MET held its land trust roundtable on May 15, 2025 on how Maryland's land mapping tools support conservation strategy. There were about 50 people in attendance. Presentations were given by units within the Department of Natural Resources, as well as the Maryland Department of Planning. More details can be found on MET's website.

Ms. Grafton stated that the Land Trust Outreach Committee did not meet in June but are planning to meet over the summer. A new Committee Chair will be appointed at that meeting.

C. Governance

Mr. Lloyd noted that there are two votes this evening.

Mr. Lloyd asked for a motion for the approval of the fiscal year 2026 Board Roster as distributed in the Board Packet prior to the meeting. Chair Burnett moved; Ms. Lynch seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Lloyd asked for a motion to approve adding Alice Ewen to MET's list of recommended Trustees. Ms. Lynch moved; Ms. Benjamin seconded. All voted in favor.

D. Finance

Mr. Hoffman referred to the four documents distributed prior to the meeting:

1. MET Balance Sheet as of April 30, 2025
2. Budget vs. Actuals: FY25 July 2024 - April 2025
3. Revised MET Budget FY 2026 MET Board Administered funds
4. Letter from the MET Chair to Governor Moore re: Maryland the Beautiful Act funding

Mr. Hoffman asked for a motion to approve the financial statement ending April 30, 2025 as distributed in the Board Packet prior to the meeting. Delegate Zeigler moved; Chair Burnett seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Hoffman noted that the Finance Committee strives to target about 4% of the money under the Board-Managed funds for distribution to MET as its annual operating budget. Mr. Turgeon and his team generally utilize a bit under that amount. This year, the allotted allowance is about \$156,000. The funds were expanded some this year to incorporate an increase to the Keep Maryland Beautiful grants that MET administers. Mr. Hoffman noted that Kelly Price and John Turgeon managed to move some funding for information technology to State funding.

Mr. Hoffman asked for a motion to approve the FY 26 budget for MET's Board-managed funds. Chair Burnett moved; Delegate Ziegler seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Hoffman informed the Board that MET wants to keep the statutory provisions of the Keep Maryland Beautiful Act in front of the Administration and the Budget Committee of the General Assembly. Mr. Hoffman proposes drafting a similar letter to the one submitted in previous years to accomplish this goal.

Mr. Hoffman entertained a motion to approve the submission of a letter from MET Chair to Governor Moore re: Maryland Beautiful Act funding as distributed in the Board Packet prior to the meeting. Delegate Ziegler motioned; Chair Burnett seconded. Ms. Bell abstained from voting. All other Trustees voted in favor.

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

Mr. Lloyd stated that there is nothing to report.

VI. Other Business

No other business was brought before the Board.

Mr. Burnett thanked legal counsel and all Trustees for their attendance and participation over the last Fiscal Year.

VII. Adjourned

Chair Burnett called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Delegate Ziegler moved; Ms. D'Arcy seconded. All voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2025.