

Minutes from meeting of MET's Land Committee
Wednesday April 22, 2026
1:00 pm

Attendees: J. Markline, D. Skalos, Ann Jones, K. Bull, T. Kovacs, M. Luddington, J Turgeon, M. D'Arcy, L. Paterini, N. Ziegler, M. Benjamin, G. Burnett, C. Highfield

Agenda Item 1) Review and approve minutes from previous Lands Committee meeting

M. Benjamin motioned to approve minutes from the previous meeting, M. D'Arcy seconded. All in favor, motion carried to approve minutes from previous Lands Committee (Committee) meeting.

Agenda Item 2) Easement Program Update

a)i. Pipeline Update

D. Skalos gave easement pipeline updates and discussed all of the outreach presentations they have been involved with around the state to generate interest in the easement program. Three potential easements have been indicated stemming from two outreach meetings. The easement pipeline remains stable. The 2026 fiscal year should end with 12 easements for 888 acres, above MFR goals for number, below MFR goals for acreage (1000). The 2027 fiscal year pipeline is well established and should end similar to 2026 in number and slightly higher in acreage.

b)i. Zigler - Kalbarczyk easement acquisition – Frederick County

Thirty-acre property to be coheld with Catoctin Land Trust. At minimum, there is a tenant house right per Frederick County Dept. of Planning and Zoning. M. Benjamin asked to clarify development rights. Frederick County Planning and Zoning is investigating what development rights remain on this property due to part of it being zoned Rural Conservation and part Agriculture. At least 1 remaining development right will be donated but it is only a tenant house. The existing house will remain. Discussion continued about development rights. Some committee members consider a reserved right to be a subdividable home. Under planning and zoning, an accessory house is different than a tenant home right. An accessory home gets a subdivision. A tenant house does not get a subdivision because it is owned by the primary residence owner. OAG advised that there should be better clarity between the two types of rights from MET. This property owner is not interested in the tax deduction and just wants to preserve the property from development.

A. Jones motioned to place the item on the BOT consent agenda. M. Benjamin seconded, motion carries, Zigler-Kalbarczyk easement acquisition to be coheld with CLT approved for Board of Trustees (BOT) consent.

b)ii. Clark and Cash-Clark easement acquisition – Garrett County

Property is 168 acres, completely forested in Garrett County. A Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) will be required even though the owner wants a prohibition on commercial timber harvesting. Discussion continued about the commercial harvest prohibition. Majority of committee members are opposed to prohibiting commercial timber harvest. Suggestions were made to better explain why the commercial prohibition would be a problem. Comment made that there is some hesitancy by landowners to give the government more authority over their land and that preventing a future landowner from being able to make money off of their property in this way

may deter others from joining the program. Suggestion made to offer Grantee approval over a harvest plan before it gets carried out.

Committee advised staff to go back to the owner in attempts to negotiate the timber harvest language to allow for commercial harvesting. No vote.

b)iii. Walter Properties via ESLC easement acquisition – Queen Anne’s County

This is now the third time the Committee has seen a plan for this 30-acre, ESLC-owned property. A previously approved plan did not contain predetermined a Right of Way Agreement (ROW) and a potential buyer wants to see a ROW incorporated before purchasing. This ROW would serve an adjacent parcel owned by the potential buyer and access from Perry’s Corners Road. Potential buyer wants preapproval from the BOT to construct a roadway with a 20-foot wide driveway on the proposed easement in order to access their adjoining uneased parcel (parcel 25). Discussion continued about ROW access options. Question posed of whether MET should hold an easement with access to an uneased parcel. OAG advised that the easement could be written in a way that a ROW would terminate upon transfer of ownership to another party in order to prevent development of the uneased adjacent property. You could modify section H. Grants to Others Across and Upon the Property. with a “notwithstanding” clause and state the modified terms. Committee members have reservations about accepting the easement with the ROW terms.

A. Jones motioned to not accept the easement with a ROW, M. Benjamin seconded. All in favor. Motion to not forward the current proposal for the ESLC property, formerly knows as “Walter Properties” with new ROW options to the BOT carries. Additionally, the Committee agrees to keep the previously approved plan with no ROW on the table and for staff to take that back to ESLC for discussion.

Agenda Item 3) Stewardship Program updates

- Staff have been busy monitoring and fielding requests for all kinds of approval since owners are listing properties on the market or getting into all kinds of spring work and construction projects.
- One of the hottest trending requests is for commercial activity. New owners want to have private businesses on their property from furniture building workshops to golf cart repair and of course, weddings. Staff are researching the best ways to manage these requests because it is a significant burden on stewardship to address all of the questions.
- Roundtable scheduled for Wednesday May 6 to discuss potential model easement updates, review of how the newer enforcement procedures have benefitted MET since adoption and review cooperative agreements Commercial activity might be discussed if time allows. A virtual roundtable specifically for commercial activity management may be scheduled later.

M. Benjamin motioned to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 14:20.