

**Minutes from meeting of MET's Land
Committee Wednesday January 21, 2026
1:00 pm**

Attendees: Committee Members: M. Benjamin (Chair), M. D'Arcy, G. Burnett, A. Jones, C Highfield; MET Staff: J Turgeon, J. Markline, K. Bull, L. Paterini, T. Kovacs, C. McCann, D. Skalos, M. Luddington; Public: Joshua Arenstein – Department of Navy

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 1 pm

1. Approve minutes from last meeting

- Motion to approve by C. Highfield, seconded by G. Burnett, all in favor, none opposed, the Minutes were approved.

2. Easement Program

Program Update:

- D. Skalos reviewed 2025 Easement Program results. 7 Easements were recorded between July 1 and December 31, 1 easement was recorded after January 1 for 541 acres. 11 Easement remain in the active pipeline totaling 1,320 acres.

Easements for Approval:

- Theodora and Zachary Kramer. Motion to BOT Consent Agenda by M. Benjamin, Seconded by G. Burnett. None opposed. Motion approved.
- Theodora and Zachary Kramer. 313 North Hibernia Road, Centreville, MD- Motion to BOT Consent Agenda by G. Burnett motioned. Seconded by C. Highfield. None opposed. Motion approved.
- Tolson Mountain Farms, LLC- M. Benjamin motioned for item to be approved by the BOT, conditionally upon input from the OAG due to remaining questions about the property. T. Kovacs stated input would be made by the May BOT meeting. A. Jones seconded the motion.
 - Discussion was held regarding the optional building areas and why they were located as they were. The owners liked the location because the power line that is proposed to go through the property would not be in view from the selected building area. The owners are motivated to donate the easement to prevent the power line from being placed on the property, but are aware that it may happen regardless of the easement getting executed. A question was raised as to whether the northern portion of the CE could get transferred separately to the state due to its proximity to Savage River State Forest. The family is not interested in selling any portions of the property right now, but the CE could be written in a way that allows subdivision only if that portion of land is purchased by DNR. It is unclear how many development rights exist on the property. Plans must first be submitted to the county for verification of building rights.
 - All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

- Alice and Bruce Chalmers- A. Jones abstained from the item due to Alice Chalmers being on LPT board. C. Highfield motioned to the BOT to deny acceptance of the easement. M D'Arcy seconded.
 - Discussion was held highlighting numerous issues with the proposal. MET's policy does not seem to allow acceptance of the property because it does not have enough extraordinary features to warrant protection under the program. Even though it is a bucolic property and has better qualities than some other easements that have been rejected, it is too small, scored low on conservation attributes, and does not have a coholding entity involved. There may be potential for upzoning in the future, which would not be allowed if the easement were accepted, but there are no development rights remaining for donation. T. Kovacs noted that there appears to be an existing encroachment on the proposed easement property with a driveway and lawn maintenance from the southern adjoining property occurring in the southeastern corner off of Falls Rd. The only remedy would be for the owners to acquire a survey to ensure no encroachment by the neighbor. M. Benjamin noted that the forested area of the property is already under Forest Conservation Easement with the county.
 - A recommendation was made for the landowners to approach a local land trust to hold the easement.
 - All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

3. Stewardship Program

- 1162PPL22.DORC- Request for Activity on easement property- Motion by M. D'Arcy to place the item on BOT Consent Agenda for conditional approval. C. Highfield seconded. None opposed. Approval of allowing placement of a temporary cell tower on the property should be conditioned upon no commercial gain by the owners from the project unless the Federal government requires it; If compensation is a requirement of the Federal government, then approval should be made conditional upon the owner accepting a nominal amount that must go directly into upkeep or enhancement of the property.
 - Discussion was held regarding the project and Navy Research Laboratory representative, J. Arenstein, was invited to provide answers to additional questions. M. D'Arcy raised the point that if the landowners were compensated by the government for use of the land for the project that it would constitute a prohibited commercial gain under the terms of the easement. J. Arenstein provided that the owners may receive compensation from the federal government for use of the land for the temporary project, but the amount is unknown and to be determined by a separate office called the Navy Facilities Command. The tower will not become permanent on the easement even if testing is successful. Another site off easement has already been selected for the structure to be built after testing is complete.

- M. Benjamin- motioned to go into closed session to receive legal advice from the OAG. C. Highfield-seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.
 - Meeting closed at 2:19pm.
- M. Benjamin motioned to reopen the meeting. G. Burnett seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.
 - Meeting reopened at 2:28pm

- 0580ROW01.WORC: Request for Amendment to the DOE - Motion to BOT Consent Agenda for approval by M. Benjamin, M. D’Arcy seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.
 - The owner does not have a current CREP contract as the previous one expired, but the MET easement memorializes the previous CREP planting areas in perpetuity, which is why an Amendment is needed to change the previous CREP buffer exhibit. Comment was made to consider allowing CREP areas to grow or be moved in future easements to avoid necessitating amendment, however goal of the easement was to prevent the CREP buffer areas from being changed.

- Motion to adjourn meeting by M. Benjamin. Seconded by M. D’Arcy. All in favor. None opposed. Motion to adjourn approved at 2:42pm.