

MET Board of Trustee

Executive Committee Meeting

September 9, 2021

In Attendance

Mary Burke, John Turgeon, Greg Bowen, Wendy Foster, Talley Kovacs, Megan D’Arcy, Gary Burnett, Julia Jitkoff and Mark Hoffman

Meeting began at 10:02 a.m.

Gary Bowen made motion to approve June 7, 2021 meeting minutes. Megan D’Arcy seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

Board and Staff vacancies –Governance Committee met this week and discussed recent board nominee, Nathan Volke. Committee Chair will be contacting nominee to have discussion about MET Board position responsibilities and his area(s) of interest. Mary discussed potential legislation to address the chronic issue we are dealing with as we are not receiving nominees from Speaker of the House, Senate President and Governors Offices as required. We are currently running at a deficit of Board members due to lack of nominees. John Turgeon reminded committee members that we can and should provide names to three offices to select from.(not sure I caught that correctly) Talley Kovacs encouraged the committee to consider moving quickly if we do want to propose legislation regarding nominees. She informed the committee the Department bills have been drafted and submitted to Governor’s Legislative office. Senator Eckardt and Delegate Jim Gilchrest would be bill sponsor. Proposed legislation would set a 90 day time frame for the three offices to provide nominations; if none are received, MET is allowed to move forward with nominees. Legislation would also address the current quorum requirement.

Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance Kickoff- Greg Bowen provided an update on the September 7th Kick off of the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance. Greg said he received a lot of positive feedback from attendees including state and federal elected officials.

Charles County Property- John Turgeon provided an update on 16 acre, Tri County Savings Bank property. It was meant to be a trade property to be sold, proceeds to benefit MET Stewardship fund. DGS has had the property listed since 2012 with very little interest or activity. The property appraised at over \$200k several years ago. The price was lowered due to lack of interest. The property does contain 16 subdivided lots. Greg Bowen did ask if we have or do plan to extinguish the building rights prior to selling. Greg suggested we do further review extinguishing the building rights before we consider selling. Megan D’Arcy did ask if properties have perked. Greg Bowen provided information on Charles Counties approach to evaluating land. John Turgeon stated further appraisal and activity relative to this property will require financial investment from private side fund. The issue is referred back to Land Committee for review and action.

Land Trust Grant Fund- John Turgeon provided brief historic overview of Land Trust Grant Fund; describing that money for the Grant Fund comes from the State's General Fund. After 2008 economic crash, money was gradually taken by the agency to fund other programs. Our last engagement with the Land Trust Grant fund was in 2003. The legislation still exists although has not been active, funded or managed in over a decade. Forever Maryland is considering legislation to re-instate the Land Trust Grant Fund. Forever Maryland is asking for MET Board support of the concept and the drafted legislation they are working on. Greg Bowen discussed revolving grant fund programs in Calvert County. He discussed how bridge funding has worked successfully with ACLT. Mark Hoffman asked how we legally would partner with Forever Maryland. John Turgeon offered that currently MET does not have the staff capacity to manage the grant fund. Talley Kovacs could not provide legal guidance at this time as to if MET could establish an MOU with Forever Maryland to manage the Land Trust Grant Fund. She did acknowledge that DNR does have many similar types of relationships established currently and it may not be a legal issue but she just cannot say with the limit amount of information she has at this time. Megan D'Arcy stated that she fully supports the Land Trust Grant Fund and is supportive of Forever Maryland managing the fund. She does question the sustainability of the fund. Overall, Executive Committee does support the concept and is willing to further explore the ongoing relationship with Forever Maryland. Greg Bowen motioned and Megan D'Arcy seconded. All voted unanimously to support.

Forever Maryland Update – Mary Burke provided an update on Forever Maryland activity. Recent conference was successful with many interesting speakers. Next year's event location has been identified in Kent Island Maryland. Fundraising is in full gear and team is working on Land Trust Grant Fund legislation, mentioned earlier in meeting. Mary stated MET will work on MOU and case for support for \$70,000 for next year's budget

Catoctin Land Trust reached out asking for nominees for their Board. They are working on building their board and seeking nominations. Mary encouraged committee members to reach out to Geb Byron.

Talley Kovacs provided brief overview of Chase Farm activity.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.