

Minutes from meeting of MET's Land Committee
Wednesday May 24, 2023
1:00 pm

Attending Committee Members: G. Burnett, M. Benjamin, A. Jones, M. D'Arcy, J. Jitkoff
Attending MET Staff: J. Turgeon, J. Markline, J. Chapman, A. Carlson, M. Mingus
Attending OAG staff: T Kovacs
Other attendees: Michael Ports, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy; Arlene and Tye Mains;
landowners

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 30, 2023, at 1 pm

Agenda Item 1. Stewardship Program

a) Stewardship Program Updates:

- Stewardship Manager Jon Chapman provided brief remarks on the status of monitoring, indicating that additional land trust reports were expected at the end of the fiscal year, with between 750 and 800 projected for the year ending June 30. Staff continue to work with the Department of IT and its contractor to complete the development of the monitoring field data collection tool, which along with the LENS aerial monitoring system is essential for MET's continued success in achieving monitoring goals. The Stewardship Manager (JC) is retiring at the end of the fiscal year.
- J. Markline provided the following updates:
 - Recruitment for a Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps Member was completed and members selected based on skills and interviews. The Chesapeake Bay Trust will also interview and determine who will be placed. Stewardship should find out if they will receive their selected members sometime in June.
 - Recruitment for an AmeriCorps Member to assist with the Volunteer Program is also ongoing.
 - Josette Markline is scheduled to assist with a presentation on the new monitoring application with the DoIT team that designed the application in August. She will also give a joint lecture regarding technology and stewardship with ESLC and LSLT in September at LTA's Rally on the same topic.

b) Request to Amend 0496WHI99.TALB: J. Markline presented the request and noted the staff recommendation is "Not Approve" due to the proposal's inconsistency with the terms of the conservation easement and MET policy. Michael Ports of Eastern Shore Land conservancy and Arlene Mains described the details of the proposal focusing on only the 23 acres under easement and not on any nearby land not under easement not owned by the Mains. They explained that they are asking to sell the 23-acre parcel because of financial circumstances and the financial viability of their long-term plans for parcel. Long-term plans include the 23 acres as open space, restoration land as part of a larger agricultural education center. After asking clarifying questions of Mr. Ports and Mrs. Mains, the Committee requested an updated proposal. Mr. Ports will send an updated proposal to J. Markline. Michael Ports, Arlene and Tye Mains left the meeting at 1:57pm. Committee discussion resulted in consensus that the proposal would violate the terms of the easement; at its core the proposal was not different from the proposal reviewed and denied by the Committee at their April 19, 2023 meeting and

that the Mains long term plans could be accomplished without modifying the easement in the way they are asking. **J. Jitkoff moved to table the proposal until MET received the requested updated proposal. A. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

c) Request to Amend and Restate CE 0077JAC82.BACO: J. Markline presented the request. **A. Jones moved to approve the request with staff recommendations and that it be placed on the consent calendar. M. D'Arcy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Agenda Item 2. Easement Program

a) Easement Program Update: A. Carlson provided the following update:

- The Conservation Easement Program with consultation of the Office of the Attorney General and J. Turgeon has been following the newly released IRS Safe Harbor Language for Extinguishment and Boundary line Adjustment clauses. The IRS released text for easement donors to consider if their donated easement (which they are still taking a tax deduction on) has language the IRS flagged.
- M. Mingus will be out this summer on paternity leave

b) Easement Pipeline Report: - A. Carlson and M. Mingus provided the following update:

- There are 23 active projects. Staff continue to field inquiries from landowners and local land trusts about projects.
- The Crothers easement in Harford County will be recorded in the next week.
- The Boehm project was already approved by the board in 2020 will go the Board of Public Works on June 21, 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 2:51 pm.