

**Minutes from meeting of MET's Land Committee**  
**Wednesday August 30, 2023**  
**1:00 pm**

Attending Committee Members: G. Burnett, M. Benjamin, A. Jones, C. Wells

Attending MET Staff: J. Turgeon, J. Markline, A. Carlson, J. Pinkney

Attending OAG staff: T. Kovacs

*Next meeting: Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 1 pm*

Agenda Item 1. Stewardship Program

a) Stewardship Program Updates: J. Markline provided the following updates:

- Recruitment for a Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps Member completed. Justyn Pinkney attended the meeting and was introduced.
- Recruitment for a longer-term contractual position which will focus on monitoring is nearly complete.
- Recruitment has begun for Stewardship Program Planner to replace J. Markline who vacated the position to become the Stewardship Program Manager. The job has been posted.
- J. Markline presented the new monitoring application with DoIT staff at the annual Townson University GIS conference. She presents in September at LTA's Rally on the same topic.
- Monitoring assignments for FY2024 are complete. Monitoring will begin shortly.
- In FY2023 more than 900 conservation easements were monitored, representing 68% of MET's portfolio. Wendy Foster, MET volunteers, contractual staff, interns, use of the LENS program and MET's co-holding land trusts contributed to the record number of easements monitored.
- J. Markline and C. Hoffman, MET's Records Manager, are actively updating and cleaning up errors in the data in MET's database known as "LOCATE"

b) Request to Amend 0496WHI99.TALB: J. Markline presented the request drawing the Committee's attention to the letter sent by the landowners to the Committee that included in the packet. **C. Wells moved to accept staff recommendation to not approve the proposal and that a new proposal/application is needed from the landowners if they wish to pursue further. G. Burnett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Agenda Item 2. Easement Program

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

- M. Mingus departed MET, accepting a job with a Pennsylvania land trust. MET is actively working to fill the position. Interviews are scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> week of September.
- Thus far MET has protected 621.04 acres in FY2024
  - Still Waters LLC conservation easement in Talbot County was recorded in July protecting 339.18 acres
  - Russell Baker conservation easement in Dorchester County was recorded in July protecting 281.859 acres

- A. Carlson, along with Assistant Attorney General T. Kovacs, processed 15 requests for Amendments due to the IRS's Safe Harbor Notice. Of the 15 requests processed, 8 were recorded in the land records within the IRS set time limit. This work encompassed most of June and July for the conservation easement program.
- A. Carlson, J. Markline, J. Turgeon and Assistant Attorneys General T. Kovacs and R. Medoff met to review MET's Conservation Easement Policy document. In the coming months, this a team will be reading this document looking for areas that need to be updated or changed. We will report to this Committee any updates we recommend and seek Committee input.
- A. Carlson will be on a panel along with A. Jones and MALPF's Michelle Cable at the Maryland Land Conservation Conference in October. The panel will address drafting conservation easement for the future.

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

- There are over 20 active projects. A. Carlson continues to field inquiries from landowners and local land trusts about projects.
- In September the Harford County Perryman easement will be recorded. This is 38 acres of forest that will become part of an existing park.
- Due to the robust existing pipeline and the limited staffing capabilities, we may not be taking on new projects for a short time.

### Agenda Item 3. Conservation Easement Projects

- a) 35.952 +/- ac in Wicomico County with Lower Shore Land Trust. A. Carlson presented the project. A. Jones moved to approve and place the project on the Consent Agenda. C. Wells seconded the motion. **The Committee unanimously voted to put it on the Consent Calendar.**
- b) 106.55 +/- ac in Kent County with Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Inc. A. Carlson presented the project. C. Wells moved to approve and place the project on the Consent Agenda. A. Jones seconded the motion. **The Committee unanimously voted to approve and put it on the Consent Calendar.**

Meeting adjourned at 1:42 pm.