

**MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION FOUNDATION
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 27, 2026**

This meeting was held via internet and telephone conference call.

Trustees Participating:

Cricket Goodall, Chair
Steve Connelly, representing Secretary Kevin Atticks, Maryland Department of Agriculture
Deborah Herr Cornwell, representing Secretary Rebecca Flora, Maryland
Department of Planning
Ben Seigel, representing Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman
Gary Dell
Allen Stiles
Tanya Spandhla
Sean Hough
Jenell McHenry
Wayne Stafford

Trustees Absent:

Ruby Thomas
William Buckel

Others Participating:

Michelle Cable, MALPF Executive Director
Chana Turner, MALPF Administrator
Rama Dilip, MALPF Administrator
Erin Lueders, MALPF Administrator
Beth Beales, MALPF Administrator
Kim Hoxter, Monitoring, Enforcement and Database Coordinator
Amanda Massoni, MALPF Fiscal Specialist
Patrick Martyn, Assistant Attorney General, Department of General Services
Renee Dyson, Assistant Attorney General, Department of General Services
Mike Steadman, Jr., Assistant Attorney General, Maryland Department of Agriculture
Billy Gorski, Anne Arundel County Staff
Colin Harrison, Wicomico County Program Administrator
Elisa DeFlaux, Talbot County Program Administrator
Heather Barthel, MDA Assistant Secretary of Administration
Jeffrey Fretwell, MDA Director of Budget and Capital Grants
Jen Wilson, Harford County Program Administrator
Joe Pippin, Queen Anne's County Program Administrator
Kaitlin Lee, Harford County Staff
Megan Benjamin, Baltimore County Program Administrator
Mike Weyand, Montgomery County Program Administrator
Julie Enger, DGS Appraiser
Will Lefort, DGS Appraiser
Roy Cool, Allegany County Program Administrator
Dave Dougherty, Harford County landowner
Tiffany Matthews-Lay, BGE, with Harford County project
Tony Kupersmith, Attorney for Carroll County landowner
Taylor Wood, representative with Harford County project
Ryan Townsend, MJ Electric, with Harford County project
Mason Hopkins, Jr., Montgomery County Landowner
Mason Hopkins, Sr., Montgomery County Landowner
Holly Baldwin, Kent County Program Administrator
Amira Armond, Harford County landowner (Winters Run Farm)
Will Webster, Harford County landowner (Winters Run Farm)
Beth Groth, Charles County Staff
Brett Herzog, representative with Harford County project

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Katherine Hagin, BGE, with Harford County project
Kristen Towner, Carroll County landowner
Mack Dickerson, representative with Harford County project
Shane Grimm, consultant with Harford County owner (Winters Run Farm)
Dominique Charnier, representative with Harford County project
Vincent Hahn, representative with Harford County project

Ms. Goodall, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. via internet and telephone conference call.
Ms. Cable stated the names of the participants on the conference call, for the record, and asked anyone that was not named to identify themselves.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Open Minutes from November 25, 2025.

Motion #1: To approve minutes from November 25, 2025.

Motion: Connelly Second: Stafford
Status: Approved

II. ADDITION / DELETION OF AGENDA ITEMS

N/A

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Cable let everyone know that the FY25 MALPF Annual Report was published, and that she appreciated all the photos the county administrators provided from their inspections and baselines, which were used in the report to showcase MALPF farms around the state and our strong county partnerships.

Ms. Cable advised that the 2026 legislative session has begun and reminded the Board members that unless the Board formally votes to authorize a comment for or against any bill, any interaction Board members have with legislators must be in their personal, Maryland citizen capacity – not as a representative of the MALPF Board.

Ms. Cable reminded Board members that they are required to complete their annual ethics disclosure report, due in April.

Ms. Cable asked the county staff that were on the call whether anyone had any announcements to make; there were none.

Ms. Cable asked all participants to keep themselves muted, and when unmuted, to clearly state their names before asking a question, or making a motion, etc. She reminded the Board members that when motions were made, Board members only needed to state their names if they were voting in opposition to the motion, rather than saying “aye” to vote in favor of a motion.

IV. EASEMENT AMENDMENTS

A. CHARLES COUNTY

1. 08-81-01c Serenity Farm, Inc ~222.755 acres

Request:

Request re-approval of a 2-acre child’s lot for Franklin A. Robinson, Jr. (as this is a re-approval, the statutory conditions for the 2-acre size of the lot have already been documented).

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval.

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Ms. Lueders introduced the item. Ms. Groth was available for any questions from the Board.

Motion #2: To approve the reapproval of a 2-acre child's lot for Franklin A. Robinson incorporating all staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion: Herr-Cornwell Second: Spandhla
Status: Approved

B. MONTGOMERY COUNTY

1. 15-82-05e Frozen Levels Farm, LLC ~155.7 acres

Request:

Request approval to exclude a child's lot for Mason Hopkins, Jr. (1 acre, up to 2 acres, if conditions are met for the increased acreage of up to 2 acres per Statute).

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval.

Ms. Lueders introduced the item. Mr. Weyand, Mr. Hopkins, Sr., and Mr. Hopkins, Jr. were available to address the Board.

Motion #3: To approve the request to exclude a child's lot for Mason Hopkins, Jr., incorporating staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion: Dell Second: Herr-Cornwell
Status: Approved

C. CARROLL COUNTY

1. 06-93-05 Thomas and Ellen Childs ~68.351 acres

Request:

Request for a 5-year extension to the validity of the preliminary release, previously approved for the original Grantors' daughter, Ellen Childs.

Recommendation:

Under COMAR 15.15.06.05.B.2, Staff recommend approval for a 5-year extension.

Ms. Dilip introduced the item and was available to address the Board.

Motion #4: To approve the request of a 5-year extension previously approved for Ellen Childs, incorporating all staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion: Dell Second: Herr-Cornwell
Status: Approved

2. 06-99-16Ae Leroy and Malinda Esh ~86.572 acres

Request:

Request approval to relocate a pre-existing dwelling which, upon relocation, will be non-subdividable from the Easement property.

Recommendation:

Staff recommend approval, subject to:

1. Compliance with COMAR 15.15.04 as described below, including the removal of the current existing dwelling from the property within 60 days of the date of issuance of the use and occupancy certificate for the new dwelling by Carroll County, or sooner if required under County law;
2. Recording an amendment to the deed of easement in the Carroll County land records that will:
 - a. document the new location of the dwelling;

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- b. affirm that the dwelling will be non-subdividable from the farm;
 - c. describe the terms and conditions of the Foundation's approval for the relocation of the dwelling pursuant to COMAR 15.15.04.05; and
3. Within 30 days of its issuance, the landowner signing and returning a letter acknowledging and agreeing to the terms and conditions of the approval of this request.

Ms. Dilip introduced the item and was available to address the Board. The Board expressed concern over the proposed location of the relocated lot, as it is the very center of the farm and there are currently no other structures or access lanes to that area. The proposed location would remove productive agricultural lands from use. Even though the dwelling would be non-subdividable, the Board was concerned with the location and the long term impact to the farming operation and wanted to know why the owner wasn't able or willing to rebuild in original location or along the road or edge of fields, using existing access lanes.

Motion #5: To deny location as proposed, with instructions to staff for further discussion with landowner and county to propose a different location that follows the MALPF Lot Location Policy.

Motion: Dell Second: Connelly
Status: Approved

3. 06-89-02 Karen Hobson ~1.802 acres

Request:

The request consists of two parts: (1) request for acknowledgement that the owners occupied the dwelling on the owner's lot in April 2024 and agreement that Landowner will receive credit towards the 5-year occupancy requirement commencing with Landowner's occupancy of the dwelling which began in April 2024 when completing the Final Release; and (2) request that, due to the death of Lou Hobson and the deteriorating health of Karen Hobson, the remainder 5-year residency requirement of Hobson's owner's lot shall be waived.

Recommendation:

Foundation Staff recommends approval of both requests, with the recommendation that a Final Release be prepared and executed to document that Mr. and Mrs. Hobson began occupancy in April 2024, and that the remainder of the occupancy requirement through April 2029 is waived.

Ms. Dilip introduced the item. Mr. Kupersmith, the Hobson's attorney, and Ms. Towner, Mrs. Hobson's granddaughter, were available to address the Board. Mr. Kupersmith provided additional details associated with the history of the lot and building the dwelling as well as the Hobsons' health.

Motion #6: To approve the request to acknowledge and receive credit towards the 5-year occupancy requirement since April 2024, incorporating all staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion: Herr-Cornwell Second: Dell
Status: Approved

Motion #7: To approve the request to waive the remainder 5-year residency requirement, incorporating all staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion: Hough Second: Herr-Cornwell
Status: Approved

D. HARFORD COUNTY

1. 12-90-04 David and Tracey Dougherty ~91.10 acres

Request:

Request approval to allow temporary overlay easement of ~12 acres on MALPF easement property to facilitate the reconstruction of an existing BGE electric transmission line.

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Recommendation:

Staff recommend approval subject to:

1. Satisfaction of all applicable requirements/conditions set forth below under the header "COMAR 15.15.16, Guidelines for Granting Overlay Easements and Rights-of-Way";
2. Approval of the temporary use agreement by the Foundation and the Office of the Attorney General as required by COMAR 15.15.16 (a template has been provided for MALPF review);
3. Approval of a survey, or other such site plan or map, that will delineate the location of the temporary overlay easement to be reviewed and approved by the Foundation and the Office of the Attorney General; and
4. Within 30 days of its issuance, the landowners signing and returning a letter acknowledging the conditions of approval as provided herein, and of any other conditions of approval as determined by the Foundation's Board.

Ms. Dilip introduced the item. Ms. Wilson, Ms. Lee, Mr. Dougherty, and the several further representatives associated with this Harford County project identified (under "Others Participating") were available to address the Board.

Motion #8: To approve the request to allow a temporary overlay easement of 12 acres on MALPF easement to facilitate the reconstruction of an existing BGE transmission line, incorporating all staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion:	Dell	Second:	Connelly
Status:	Approved		
2.	12-15-06	Winters Run Farm, LLC	~322.63 acres

Request:

Request #1: approval to relocate two pre-existing dwellings (pre-existing dwellings #2 and #3 on attached map); and request #2: establish two dog kennels on the farm within the 1-acre surrounding two of the pre-existing dwellings (pre-existing dwellings #1 and #3 on attached map).

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval for both requests, subject to:

1. Compliance with COMAR 15.15.04 as described below, including the removal of the current existing dwellings from the property within 60 days of the date of issuance of the use and occupancy certificate for the new dwellings by Harford County, or sooner if required under County law;
2. Recording of an amendment to the deed of easement in the Harford County land records that will:
 - a. document the new location of the dwellings;
 - b. affirm that all three of the dwelling will be non-subdividable from the farm;
 - c. describe the terms and conditions of the Foundation's approvals for the relocation of the dwelling pursuant to COMAR 15.15.04.05;
3. Staff recommend Board approval of the proposed kennels be conditioned upon receipt of approval by the Harford County's Zoning Board of Appeals, once available;
4. Within 30 days of its issuance, the landowner signing and returning a letter acknowledging and agreeing to the terms and conditions of the approval of this request; and
5. Receipt of LLC documents of Winters Run Farm LLC

Ms. Dilip introduced the item. Ms. Wilson, Ms. Lee, Ms. Armond, Mr. Webster, and Mr. Grimm were available to address the Board.

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Motion #9: To approve the request to relocate two pre-existing dwellings, incorporating all staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion: Connelly Second: Dell
Status: Approved

Motion #10: To approve the request to establish two dog kennels, incorporating all staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion: Hough Second: Spandhla
Status: Approved

E. QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

1. 17-87-04 Mark Sultenfuss ~179.95 acres

Request:

To request approval for a revised land exchange to amend the configuration of a fully released child's lot

Recommendation:

1. satisfaction of all applicable requirements/conditions set forth in COMAR 15.15.11.03.A and COMAR 15.15.11.03.C, which require, among other things, a determination that the value of the easement will not be diminished as a result of the land exchange (*Department of General Services, Office of Real Estate (DGS) has determined that the value of the easement will not be diminished as a result of the revised land exchange*);
2. within 30 days of issuance, the landowner signing and returning a letter acknowledging the conditions of approval as provided herein, and of any other conditions of approval as determined by the Foundation's Board;
3. approval by the Board of Public Works; and
4. the landowner entering into (a) An Amended Easement to add the acres back into the easement, (b) completing a Partial Release to release the areas from the easement, then (c) completing an Amended Final Release Agreement for the child's lot to show the new configuration of the lot (showing the access now as a ROW)

Ms. Dilip introduced the item. Mr. Pippin was available to address the Board.

Motion #11: To approve a revised land exchange to amend the configuration of a fully released child's lot, incorporating all staff recommendations, as presented.

Motion: Dell Second: Stiles
Status: Approved

2. 17-24-12 Francis and Glenda Messix ~213.861 acres

Request:

Request to exclude an unrestricted lot in three possible locations, listed in numerical order of preference (1 acre, up to 2 acres, if conditions are met for the increased acreage of up to 2 acres per Statute).

Recommendation:

Staff recommend approval pursuant to MD. Code, Agriculture Article, Section 2-513(b)(3) and (7). The three locations, listed in numerical order of preference, all meet the lot location policy and therefore whichever of the three locations passes all health and engineering requirements is acceptable to MALPF staff for the release of the sole unrestricted lot.

Ms. Dilip introduced the item. Mr. Pippin was available to address the Board.

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Motion #12: To approve the request to exclude an unrestricted lot in three possible locations, as presented.

Motion: Herr-Cornwell Second: Connelly
 Status: Approved

V. NEW AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION EASEMENT PETITIONS
 N/A

VI. PROGRAM POLICY

A. Charles County Certification Request

Recommendation:

Charles County's land preservation program complies with the requirements under COMAR 34.03.03; therefore, MDP and MALPF staff recommend, and MDP has approved, recertification for Fiscal Years 2024-2026 2025-2027 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027)*.

Ms. Lueders presented the item. Ms. Herr-Cornwell provided the Department of Planning's agreement and recommended approval.

Motion #13: To approve recertification request from Charles County land preservation program under COMAR 34.03.03.

Motion: Hough Second: Stiles
 Status: Approved

**Note that the Fiscal Years listed in the original recommendation incorrectly listed FY2024-2026, when it should have been FY2025-2027. The actual dates of certification listed in the parenthetical were correct (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027).*

VII. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

A. FY 2026 Quarterly Inspection

Ms. Hoxter presented the item and was available to address any questions from the Board.

B. Legislative Update

Ms. Cable provided the Board with the status of the 2026 legislation session and which bills may affect MALPF. In addition, Ms. Cable informed the Board of what the Governor included for MALPF funding in his budget submission. The original budget included for MALPF incorporates the second of four years of the BFRA reductions that were approved in the 2025 legislative session.

The chart below provides the budget submitted for FY27, plus the estimates for the next few years, including the BFRA reductions. During the April MALPF Board meeting (after the budget is approved earlier in April), the Board will need to decide whether or not to merge the FY27 and FY28 budgets into a single application cycle or go back to a single year cycle. The Board will also need to decide how many applications will be accepted for the next cycle.

Fiscal year	Allocation (transfer tax)	Amount transferred to General Fund (2025 BRFA)	Allocation After General Fund Transfer (thru FY29)	County	MALPF Total in Budget
FY 2027	\$38,433,035	\$11,706,612	\$26,726,423	\$12,000,000	\$38,726,423
FY 2028	\$43,591,394	\$11,527,561	\$32,063,833	\$12,000,000	\$44,063,833
FY 2029	\$45,909,216	\$11,309,377	\$34,599,839	\$12,000,000	\$46,599,839
FY 2030	\$47,868,128	\$0	\$47,868,128	\$12,000,000	\$59,868,128

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VIII. CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Goodall asked for a motion for adjournment of the meeting to move into a closed session, pursuant to the applicable provisions of General Provisions Article Section 3-305 (b): (3) to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition; (7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and (8) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation

Motion #14: To adjourn the regular session at 10:53 a.m. to move into a closed session to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition.

Motion: Herr-Cornwell Second: Dell
Status: Approved

The Closed Meeting of the Board was held from 11:08 a.m. to 11:25 a.m. on January 27, 2026, via internet and telephone conference call, pursuant to the provisions of the General Provisions Article Section 3-305 (b): Annotated Code of Maryland:

General Provisions Article Section 3-305(b):

(3) to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition;

(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and

(8) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.

During the Closed Meeting, the following Board members were present: Cricket Goodall, Chair, Steve Connelly, representing Secretary Kevin Atticks, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Deborah Herr Cornwell, representing Secretary Rebecca Flora, Maryland Department of Planning, Tanya Spandhla, Sean Hough, Jenell McHenry and Allen Stiles.

The following Board members were absent: Ruby Thomas, William Buckel, Wayne Stafford, Gary Dell, and Ben Seigel, representing Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman.

The following MALPF staff and legal representatives were also present during the closed session meeting: Michelle Cable, Rama Dilip, Beth Beales, Erin Lueders, Chana Turner, Amanda Massoni, Kimberly Hoxter, Michael Steadman, Jr., Assistant Attorney General, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Renee Dyson, Assistant Attorney General, Maryland Department of General Services and Patrick Martyn, Assistant Attorney General, Maryland Department of General Services.

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

- A. Approval of November 25, 2025. Closed Minutes
- B. Status Report of Pending Legal Issues
- C. FY 25/26 Round 2 Offers
- D. Update- Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project

Respectfully Submitted:


Michelle Cable, MALPF Executive Director