

Conservation Lands Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes October 11, 2024

Meeting convened about 1:00 pm with Mike Taylor, Chair; John Barry; Susan Warner; and Shelley Owens attending

Committee organization

Shelley will resign to comply with Gustavus Ordinance 2.40.150(d)(1)(A) that limits two Councilmembers per committee. She will continue participating on the Committee as the Secretary.

Approval of Minutes

Susan moved to approve the September 20, 2024, meeting minutes; seconded by John; approved.

Reports from committee members on assigned tasks and discussion:

Committee Mission and Problem Statement (Taylor)

The Mission Statement is contained in Resolution CY24-12, and the Committee discussed the Problem Statement prepared and circulated by Mike. Susan moved to accept the statement as amended; seconded by John; approved unanimously. Susan will send a copy to Margaret Custer of SEALT and to Senator Kiehl.

Map development and descriptions of Gustavus conservation lands (Warner and Barry)

John is developing an inventory spreadsheet with ownership of conservation lands, researching conservation easements, quitclaim deeds and maps on the DNR website. There are some inconsistencies between maps and legal descriptions, and some are incomplete and outdated. He will be using the Alaska Mapper on the DNR website. There was a discussion about the Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area Management Plan updated in 2017 and the school trust holding within it. Mike: conservation lands include TNC lands; Dude Creek; Dude Creek south by TNC & deeded to state (A&B); Beach Park tracts A & B2 (CRMA-managed); School Trust; all currently protected; Other areas of interest (private lands, *e.g.* DeBoer); Mental Health Trust Lands; CIRI; CIRI tower road.

Gustavus Forelands. Preservation of the Gustavus Forelands is one of the biggest early tasks. There was a discussion about TNC tracts. TNC has no immediate plans for Gustavus lands and are very interested to have conversations with the City and the CLA Committee. Susan will contact Julia Nave, TNC SE Program Director who can provide a larger-format map. Stephanie at SEALT has ideas for grant funding to transfer TNC lands to SEALT.

Southeast Alaska Lands Trust contact and a memorandum of understanding (Warner).

Susan met with SEALT in late August in Juneau, and there is an interest in forming a relationship with the City. An endowment fund would be needed to support a land transfer to SEALT. The potential for funding a land manager based on the City pay scale was discussed with two scenarios: part time (¼) without benefits (\$17K); or half time with benefits (\$37.5K). Halftime employment is needed to provide benefits.

Golf course lands.

Mike suggested a 4-year public use lease agreement for a conservation easement to provide time to develop a long-term plan, paid for by Endowment Fund. SEALT typically doesn't do short-term easements, but Margaret thinks it is doable. Funding would go to SEALT to lease the lands from the DeBoers. A question was raised if SEALT is the grantee would they qualify for funding without an office in Gustavus? Susan will prepare a position description of land manager duties. The cost of supporting an endowment fund for the long term was mentioned, as well as the possibility of in-kind contributions for future funding or a private grant match. A suggestion was made to draft a definition of undeveloped lands in the Resolution to ensure that the golf course is included. Mike will review the current land ordinance.

Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area (DCCHA) status review (Taylor)

The two tracts south of the DCCHA deeded to DNR in the Forelands purchase require legislative action to be included and managed in the DCCHA. It's been in limbo for 20 years, but Sen. Kiehl has a bill ready for the right vehicle to attach it to. Tract A & B are managed by the DNR Habitat Division. There are management plan concerns. The benefit of cutting the emerging lodgepole pines across the Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area is to preserve open space and vistas for sandhill cranes. They require wet meadows and open views. One means of suppressing pines is to keep the lands too wet for their establishment and growth. We should make sure there are no drainage efforts that would dry the land and support pine and spruce establishment. It might also be possible to block drainage to keep it wet.

Tower Road Easement (Taylor).

Mike contacted Sarah at the Park regarding the Tower Road easement and access to the Bartlett Lake Trail. She said it is an ongoing concern and there is interest in parking and access to the trail. The 60-ft wide easement from the road doesn't include the pad; NPS is considering adding parking (wilderness land) or acquiring from CIRI.

Next Meetings: Friday, October 25th, 1:00 pm at City Hall: Endowment Fund application

Friday, November 15th, 1:00 pm at City Hall

Adjournment 2:55

Shelley

Shelley Owens
Secretary