

From: [Julie Howell](#)
To: [Liesl Barker](#)
Subject: \$25K grant application and Conservation Lands Leasing Project
Date: Thursday, December 12, 2024 18:16:20

Hi Liesl, would you mind distributing my email to the council members for Monday's meeting? Thank you.

Dear Mayor McLaughlin and members of the Gustavus city council,

Because of my past interest and support of the "Beach Project", that gave Gustavus management rights of our beach, and our work with the DeBoer family that has allowed the citizens of Gustavus to enjoy the adjoining "beach meadowlands" owned by the DeBoers, Mike Taylor shared with me the Conservation Lands Leasing Project which will be on your next agenda. I would like to lend my support of the \$25,000 grant application to work towards supporting this project.

I think we can all agree that the DeBoers have been incredibly generous in allowing the public free access to their private land. They, and we, know what a priceless gem the meadowlands are to our town. I can't think of anyone else in our town who would allow the public, free access to their private property.

After Morgan DeBoer's passing (Ben's father), Ben inherited a large part of the meadowlands while his aunt, Donna, holds the remaining portion. I was petrified Ben would sell and we'd all see the meadowlands developed. But Ben and Donna worked with us on the Beach Project and expressed their desire for the beach meadowlands to continue as a place where the public could walk, bird watch, pick berries, etc., but certainly no driving on the meadowlands.

The small snippets I have heard from Ben in the past, is that they have already had lawyers' fees and there was a discussion about liability insurance for the family on the land to cover any public accidents. And our town continues to play on their land and pay nothing for that privilege.

I think \$25,000 is a pittance to not only fund this project that is working to secure the future of the beach meadowlands for public access, but it is also a small gesture to the DeBoer family that demonstrates to them that we recognize and appreciate what they are trying to do for this town. The DeBoer land is probably the most valuable tract of land in Gustavus both for its value to a developer and as a priceless treasure to our community.

Make no mistake, this is not just the DeBoers' problem of how to secure their land for Gustavus, we must be in this project together with them. There will always be the threat of the developer who might make an offer the DeBoers could not refuse.

I hope you too will recognize the urgency in securing the future of this land for Gustavus and work to help the DeBoers protect the meadowlands.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Howell