

December 15, 2024

To the Gustavus City Council,

-- I respectfully ask that this letter be read into the public record at the General Meeting of the City Council on Monday, December 16, 2024, as I will be out of town and unable to attend. --

Thank you all for your public service, and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the scoping document and Endowment Fund proposal, both of which address the issue of continued public access to the DeBoer property adjacent to the beach.

I am in support of the City making this good faith effort to begin a process whereby we as a community might be able to continue to use this area for recreation and enjoyment as we have for the past several decades, thanks to the generosity of the DeBoers. Specifically, the Endowment Fund grant money will allow a critical breathing space in which to develop the long term plan that could make this vision of permanent public access become reality. The fact that Southeast Alaska Land Trust (SEALT) has offered, with the benefit of this funding, to negotiate with the landowners, manage a two-year lease, while also taking the lead on fundraising efforts to put the land into permanent conservation status is unparalleled in its timeliness and valuable contribution towards achieving this long term goal.

In my opinion, the Endowment Fund grant proposal lays out a reasonable and appropriate use of grant funds over the two-year period under consideration. It's true there is no guarantee of success of the long term goal, but as a short term step to initiate the longer process, I believe it is a risk well worth taking. The benefits to this community over the many years ahead if we are successful is practically incalculable.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Respectfully,

Lillian Ruedrich