

**Conservation Lands Advisory Committee**  
**Report for November 11, 2024, Council General Meeting**  
(Submitted for packet on November 4, 2024)

**The City of Gustavus Conservation Lands Advisory Committee was established by Resolution CY24-2** in May 2024. The council authorized eight seats on the committee but following an application period, there were only six applicants. Mayor Shelley Owens appointed members, and the council confirmed the membership at the August 24 general meeting as follows:

John Barry  
Shelley Owens  
Colleen Stansbury  
Kathy Streveler  
Susan Warner  
Mike Taylor (Chair)

There remained two authorized seats open to application.

**Meetings are posted publicly posted** in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

The committee has met three times: September 20, October 11, and October 25. Minutes are recorded for each meeting and approved in subsequent meetings. They will be posted on the City website by the City Clerk as soon as the site can be prepared.

**Committee work so far** has included:

1. Review of the committee's resolution and purpose.
2. Organization and meeting procedures in accordance with City procedures and with the Alaska Open Meetings Act requirements.
3. Election of Shelley Owens as the Committee secretary to record and prepare minutes.
4. Completion of a Mission Statement and Problem Definition as required by City policy and procedure for advisory committees, a copy of which is attached to this report.
5. **Key initial tasks**, priorities and member assignments are:
  - a. Identify and map existing lands in Gustavus under formal conservation status, such as The Gustavus Forelands Preserve (TNC); Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area; Gustavus Beach Park; (Barry and Warner)
  - b. Identify natural lands not in formal conservation status but worthy of similar protection, such as the former golf course tracts; and possibly other smaller suitable private parcels whose owners wish to transfer or place under conservation easements. (Barry and Warner)

c. Establish cooperative relationships and develop Memorandums of Understanding with conservation agencies with interests or lands in Gustavus: ADF&G for Dude Creek CHA (Taylor); The Nature Conservancy (Streveler and Warner); Southeast Alaska Land Trust (aka SEAL Trust, or SEALT) (Warner). The purpose would be to take more-active management or oversight roles with land agencies to strengthen protection and assurance for those conservation lands and to keep the Gustavus community informed and involved.

d. Begin to work with SEAL Trust in partnership to secure protective measures for the former golf course tracts in cooperation with the DeBoer family. (Warner)

6. Following the Municipal Election, in which committee member Susan Warner was elected to the City Council, the committee then exceeded the maximum council membership for an advisory committee under City code. Therefore, Shelley Owens resigned as an official committee member to reduce the number of sitting council members to two: Taylor and Warner. Shelley offered to continue to serve as the committee secretary in a non-voting ex-officio role. We very much appreciate Shelley's assistance in recording and preparing the committee minutes.

7. Larry Landry in late October filed an application to join the committee in time a Mayor's appointment and confirmation by the Council at the November general meeting. As chair of the committee, I encourage any other interested Gustavus residents to apply to serve with us in one of the open seats.

8. **Former golf course tracts are high priority task:** Susan has been working with SEAL Trust Executive Director Margaret Custer in Juneau to develop options for the future of the open beach upland meadows on both sides of Dock Road. The Committee developed the idea to offer to lease the tracts in their natural state for public recreational use for a set period from the DeBoer family, with funding by a combination of an Endowment Fund grant and possible private supplementary contributions. The lease would recognize and acknowledge the generosity of the DeBoer family in allowing public recreational use and assure the tracts remain undeveloped while further long-term conservation options are explored. SEAL Trust liked the idea and has been in communication with the DeBoer family to discuss. Susan Warner drafted an application for a 2024 grant from the Endowment Fund and submitted it by the October 31 deadline. The application is in the name of the committee with SEAL Trust as a partner. If negotiations do not progress for some reason, the committee will withdraw the application.

The Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet next on Nov 15 at 1:00 pm at City Hall if member schedules allow. Watch for a posted announcement and agenda at least five days in advance.

For more detail, please see our (soon to be) posted minutes. The public is always welcome to attend Committee meetings.

Submitted by

Mike Taylor, Chair