**From:** Shelley Owens <shelley.owens@gustavus-ak.gov>
**Sent:** Monday, January 29, 2024 3:00 PM
**To:** Ivy Spohnholz <ivy.spohnholz@TNC.ORG>
**Cc:** Hank Lentfer <hlentfer@gmail.com>; Julia Nave <julia.nave@TNC.ORG>; Alison C. Cohan <acohan@TNC.ORG>; Crystal Nelson <crystal.nelson@TNC.ORG>; Amy Miller <amy.l.miller@TNC.ORG>; Caitlin Hedberg <caitlin.hedberg@TNC.ORG>; Kelsey Schober <kelsey.schober@TNC.ORG>; Kathy Leary <kathy.leary@gustavus-ak.gov>; Liesl Barker <liesl.barker@gustavus-ak.gov>
**Subject:** RE: Thank you!

Hi Ivy,

Correspondence between TNC and the City of Gustavus has recently come to light through a diligent search by City Administrator Kathy Leary of email files of the previous City Administrator, Tom Williams as follows:

On February 20, 2020 Jim DePasquale wrote a lengthy email to Tom memorializing a conversation they had regarding transfer of the TNC lands to the City of Gustavus.  This was followed by an email from Steve Cohn to Tom on February 28, 2020 anticipating further engagement between TNC and Gustavus when Hank Lentfer returned to Alaska.  On February 25, 2020 Tom forwarded Jim’s email to the mayor and vice-mayor and said he would propose a work group of 3 council members to review the discussion and provide input to the council.  Tom’s subsequent reports and council minutes do not reflect that a work group was formed or that discussions with TNC resumed when Hank returned, but the City by then was in high gear responding to the Covid 19 pandemic, unable to hold in-person council meetings, and fully engaged in responding to the emerging health crisis.

While discussions among Tom, Jim, and Steve evidently did not develop further, we are now in position to resume careful consideration of Jim’s offer, and are interested in engaging in discussions about accepting transfer of the lands to the City.  While I know these email communications, as well as the letter from HIA seeking transfer of the lands preceded your tenure with TNC, I am hoping we can restore the vision expressed by Jim that “…TNC led this project for the benefit of the community of Gustavus, and we feel that transferring ownership of the TNC parcels to the City of Gustavus can empower the community to set the vision for these preserves and have direct involvement in their stewardship.”

Shelley

*Shelley K. Owens*

*Mayor, City of Gustavus*