

Conservation Lands Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – July 25, 2025
Approved

Meeting convened at 3:00 pm with Members Mike Taylor (Chair), John Barry (Zoom), Colleen Stansbury, Kathy Streveler, and Susan Warner; Absent: Tanner Horst, Larry Landry; Others: Hank Lentfer (TNC), and Shelley Owens (Secretary)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the June 19, 2025 meeting were approved by consensus.

The TNC Gustavus Forelands Preserve September Celebration

Kathy and Colleen proposed a Saturday, September 13th guided walk on the loop, followed by a light potluck lunch at 1:00 pm and a talk by Neal Barton and ADF&G moose scientists about moose collar and harvest data on TNC lands. Susan suggested including data from the subsistence harvest team. Kathy asked Hank about scheduling a joint work party for trail clearing instead of the guided walk. The suggestion was well received and Hank will do the chainsaw work on the Nagoonberry Trail in advance. Colleen offered to assist. Hank: Fran Ulmer (AK TNC Board) and Rand Hagenstein (former state director of TNC) will be attending. Bands for a music event were discussed and Mike will check on the possibility of city funding.

Trails Discussion

Trail suggestions included expansion east of Nagoonberry Trail; 2 section line easements off Willow Way; and Dickey Drive down to the beach. Concern about motorized traffic was discussed and Hank suggested a deviated foot trail; Mike suggested developing a narrow trail and a bridge over wet spots. Hank and Susan noted the ditch on Alder way keeps ATVs off. Mike noted deviation off the section line can be done once TNC land is reached. The Willow Way easements were discussed. John has a surveyor's report from the unorganized borough platting office which he will circulate. Some of the easements are 100 feet wide.

Mike asked if CLAC wants to proceed with trail planning. Kathy would like to discuss possible trail option locations, and Susan said moving on with trails should come from community, not CLAC which has no mandate for trail development. Mike suggested hosting a public meeting to discuss, and Susan agreed about community engagement. Colleen: trails are not what CLAC is designed to do; not in our remit which is to catalogue and index public lands; trail development doesn't fit into it. A public meeting should come from the Council, not from CLAC.

John discussed public access and awareness. Trails have a practical function of keeping people in the easement and from trespassing on private property, and are a safety issue in areas which are a muddy mess. With section line easement rights of passage, parking is an unpermitted use of the land. A discussion followed with Mike about whether a parking area can be built in an easement. John: Subdivision plats show section lines but not easements and owners may not know about public

easement. There was poor plat surveying until 1990's with no unorganized borough platting authority. Willow Way area was platted in late 60's/70's.

Other conservation issues? Re: Forelands Preserve

Mike talked with Margaret Custer and is cautious of beach tracts conservation status which could change even under TNC. Deed restrictions aren't a separate legal ownership like a conservation easement (CE) and can be removed pretty easily. SEALT is willing to fund a formal CE but the current focus is on the beach meadows. TNC has fee simple ownership with deed restrictions but they can be removed in court. State DNR has the development rights and could sue TNC. Hank thinks it low risk and says TNC has a duty to conserve the conservation aspect in perpetuity. Mike says our remit is to understand the conservation issues and protective measures. Kathy stated the concern is transfer of the development rights. DNR can't sell the development rights and an owner has to have title and development rights to build. The State has to have a partner to develop (eg. with TNC). John is concerned an owner could just build and deal with the consequences. Hank will talk with Margaret.

SEALT grant application for Beach Meadows perpetual CE

Susan: SEALT turned in the grant application paperwork and Stephanie told her we may hear about the grant by the end of year; she would like to meet and discuss with us.

Colleen: spoke with Donna, Jake and Travis. She suggests signage such as the DeBoer Family Beach Meadows; Susan: this will come up in discussion about signage, etc..

Map development and descriptions of Gustavus conservation lands

John: holding off giving maps to Liesl until determination of Willow Way access; will discuss access to Good River parcel with Mike

Web page developments

Susan: Liesl wants to hold off until the new system is in place.

Other land issues

Susan wants to look at Mental Health Trust lands south of Willow Way; the neighborhood is working on drainage; will discuss in October.

John: There is a 13-acre parcel at Rink Creek; it is marked for disposal but it will take a year with the survey, etc. to put up for sale. An appraisal would be needed and a negotiated sale would be 150% of the appraised value. He is listed as an interested party and will be informed. He thinks we should talk with SEALT; he is motivated by preserving public access to the beach. Mike: it may be possible to add it to the NAWCA grant.

John: has a fact sheet from DNR about quieting title of accreted lands which he will send.

Next meeting in August: TBD

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 pm

Submitted by Shelley Owens