



**City of Gustavus**  
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April 13, 2020

Dear Fellow Gustavus Residents,

I'm writing to ask your cooperation and support for the continuing development of our community Beach Park. Our community Park is not a project driven by a narrow set of City staff or Council members. It is responsive to a broad portion of the community, *your friends and neighbors*, many of whom have given generously of their personal time to achieve a project of lasting value for us all.

A large group of residents, with a vision for protecting the quality and nature of our superb beach lands, approached the City Council when Barb Miranda was Mayor, asking the City to assure public enjoyment of the two State-owned beach tracts, with confidence that the natural values would not be degraded by damaging uses. Beach advocates were particularly worried by the growing number of rutted and eroding off-road vehicle tracks spreading across the fragile landscape. An informal "Beach Committee" formed to recommend a way forward for the City to manage the tracts in cooperation with the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Drawing from public input gathered from more than a dozen public meetings, the Committee and Mayor Miranda negotiated a Cooperative Resource Management Agreement (CRMA) between DNR and the City. The CRMA, signed by State and City representatives, is consistent with State law, DNR policy, and the 1985 US Court agreement granting Quieting Title covenants to the DeBoer family, whose homestead lands bound the State beach tracts. The covenants legally require the properties to be open to low-intensity public recreational uses that do not degrade the natural character of the lands.

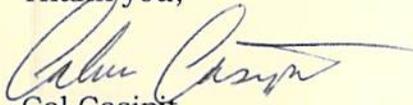
The City is accordingly authorized by the CRMA to make limited amenity improvements and set rules for beach tract use to assure the resources are sustained in their natural state. The included CRMA management plan, sets forth limited initial developments with motor vehicle access only to a parking area on the east side. The remainder of the tracts are closed to motorized traffic and will be allowed to revegetate as naturally as possible. As discussed in the CRMA the quieting title of 1985 prohibited motorized access to those beach lands, and past such uses has been unlawful. Key existing public use amenities such as the popular fire pit, picnic tables,

benches, and walking routes consistent with the covenants will be maintained or enhanced. With input from the public, more amenities may be considered for the future. The City particularly sees a need for parking improvements along Dock Road right-of-way and is working with Alaska DOT to that end.

The City's limited budget for beach park improvements is supplemented by donated community volunteer labor as the CRMA provisions are being adopted. We understand that community views differ on how best to use the park and where to allow vehicle access. But recent townhall and other public input to the City Council have strongly supported the protective measures implemented per the CRMA.

The Beach Park is a work in progress. We will evaluate how the measures serve the community and work to make it a community park that is a pride for all of us. As your Mayor, I ask all community members to please set aside differences regarding details for now and recognize this as a community effort being achieved through an open, democratic, public process. Please show your support for your community, its volunteers, and for the beach that we all value dearly, by respecting the vehicle limits and amenities as they are implemented. The City Administration, Council, and volunteer beach park advocates value your input as we do our best to secure a Beach Park to be enjoyed by all for generations to come.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cal Casipit', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cal Casipit

Mayor, City of Gustavus