

Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

9 March 2016

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Adam Burnett

Olin Lathrop

Meeting Activity:

- The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM

The first order of business was review of minutes from 10Feb2016.

- Brian Bettencourt noted that he'd included Holly Estes in the chance to review (via email).
- Olin Lathrop moves to approve, Adam Burnett seconds; Motion to approve minutes approved via unanimous vote.

The second order of business was any membership updates.

- Adam Burnett noted he had not seen the candidate from his work, and would follow up.
- Brian Bettencourt mentioned that Holly Estes often has trouble with this time/date (2nd Wednesdays), and she'd said the 3rd or 4th Wednesdays might work.
- Olin Lathrop felt the committee needed to hear from her definitively before doing any moves --- need to talk to town clerk to move things around.
- Olin Lathrop had to avoid conflicts with Consv. Comm. and Selectmen meetings.
- Brian Bettencourt said he would try to get clarity from Holly Estes on a truly better time/day; her presence is desirable
- Action Item for Brian Bettencourt: email Holly Estes, say the committee is open to moving, but we'd need a firmer sense of her availability.

The third order of business was the change of the Committee's name.

- Brian Bettencourt mentioned he'd heard from Mark Haddad; the name change is official to "Invasive Species Committee".
- The committee discussed that there is no sentiment for changing the size of committee.

The fourth order of business was Applicators' licenses.

- Olin Lathrop described a meeting he'd had with Mark Haddad couple months ago; he walked in with cost estimates, information.
- Olin Lathrop wasn't sure about consumables cost. Thought that Mark Haddad said that he'd put it on the agenda, and by the time that meeting actually happened, Olin Lathrop would have estimates to show the selectmen.

- Olin Lathrop never got reply from most recent email (apologizing) to Mark Haddad for the apparent mixup (Mr. Haddad indicated via email that the estimates would happen before the meeting was scheduled).
- Olin Lathrop felt we needed to get estimates for consumable costs for herbicide application.
- Olin Lathrop learned from Rick Finley (Littleton Conserv. Trust) that mostly what we'll use is glyphosate (Roundup).
- Brian Bettencourt felt that Roundup is still the best formulation – others agreed.
- Olin Lathrop indicated that once the committee has a license(s) we can use "Roundup Pro"; he wrote/called to Griffin's Supply in Tewksbury and was waiting to hear back from them.
- Olin Lathrop also indicated that the remaining question is unit cost and amount needed.
- Olin Lathrop mentioned that he'd left a message (today) for Tim Simmons at Mass Wildlife – a Phragmites expert with 20-30 years' research on what works/doesn't. Olin hasn't heard back from him yet, but apparently, cut and then spray works great followed by a 2nd pass.
- Olin Lathrop understood that Mr. Simmons would come out and talk in person, and has videos online teaching control methods. Mr. Simmons works out of HQ in Westboro.
- Action Item: Olin Lathrop will keep following up with Tim Simmons.
- Adam Burnett asked about Mr. Haddad's concern with cost, and whether applicator license and materials would come from a separate source of funding.
- Olin Lathrop indicated not necessarily – if the Selectmen vote to pay for our license, the committee would request additional funds for the actual application later. The town won't pay for our labor, just consumables. So Mr. Haddad's question re/ costs is a very reasonable one.
- Olin Lathrop mentioned that the commercial cost is \$several K / acre for Phragmites removal; ours will be much, much cheaper.
- Olin Lathrop also felt that we should remember that we will have volunteers cutting in front of us; herbicide application only comes in behind them. Generally this is done in Fall, so we're talking about 2017. Plenty of time to get everything set up correctly. We will be applicators in 2017.

The fifth order of business was the Final Bittersweet Brochure.

- Brian Bettencourt reviewed changes to the document with the committee.
- The Committee looked at the document on the projection screen.
- Brian Bettencourt described some similar work he is doing for the Friends of Wachusett mountain – Facebook posts on individual invasive species.
- Olin Lathrop moved to approve this version of the brochure; Adam Burnett seconded.
- The motion to approve passed unanimously.
- The next point discussed was How to handle printing.
- Action Item: Adam Burnett has the PDF of the brochure; he will upload or go physically to Fedex/Kinko's/other vendor and get costs.
 - The committee agreed to use something slightly better than copy paper.

- The vendor should fan-fold the brochure.
 - Adam will email committee with cost; The committee will pay out of pocket.
- Olin Lathrop and Brian Bettencourt both reiterated that the committee must make sure to include Holly Estes in the opportunity to pay and participate in the brochure work.

The sixth order of business was consideration of Phragmites and/or other species as publication candidates.

- The committee discussed finding Phragmites around Groton:
 - Olin Lathrop mentioned that the Throne hill hike was cancelled due to weather.
 - Adam Burnett found Phragmites under powerlines on 119, over by MRM realty.
 - Brian Bettencourt looked in W Groton --- found plenty of Phragmites at the intersection of 113/119 by Pepperell.
 - He also indicated that he was sure it's found down the hill in some places but haven't checked in Bertozzi area.
 - Olin Lathrop confirmed Phragmites is found up on the Throne; several wetlands and at least one pond.
- Brian Bettencourt felt perhaps Phragmites may not be a good candidate for the next publication – too difficult to do anything about.
- Olin Lathrop mentioned knotweed: Difficult but possible to control by lay people.
- Adam Burnett felt care was in order for knotweed, because cuttings will root.
- Olin Lathrop and Brian Bettencourt mentioned multiflora rose, Honeysuckle, Buckthorn, Barberry, and Garlic mustard.
- Olin Lathrop voiced support for knotweed, but indicated that the committee should wait, and see how people respond to the first brochure - Don't overwhelm with info.
- Brian Bettencourt supported this proposition, but indicated that all members should: Action Item: 1) Take pictures of diverse invasives around Groton and 2) Keep notes of where pics are from.
- Brian Bettencourt asked how if at all can we communicate with "the town" other than a printed publication?
- Olin Lathrop felt the committee could use the TAG email list - Only when we have something legit to say.
- Brian Bettencourt described his similar dissemination of information for the Wachusett group.
- Olin Lathrop indicated this activity is similar to Marlena Gilbert's reports on School Committee meetings.
- Brian Bettencourt said that a key difference is, she's not a member --- she's giving a private citizen's report of what she heard... This is different from how/when/whether the Committee is allowed to make "reports" in a public forum.
- Olin Lathrop indicated that under OML the Committee is allowed to report to TAG *factually* about what happened at meetings.
- Olin Lathrop asked Brian Bettencourt to make a version of the brochure that's just 4 pages not bifold – a PDF, and Olin Lathrop will post to TAG.
- Action Item: Brian Bettencourt will make simple 4-page version of bittersweet brochure.

- Action Item: Olin Lathrop will post brochure and writeup to TAG.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether the Committee could make similar posts to TAG re/ other species.
- Olin Lathrop felt the committee could do it when we have brochures for each species.
- Adam Burnett voiced support for Phragmites since is so important to talk about ... it has such big impact, and we need to learn about what people can do about it.
- Olin Lathrop indicated maybe for Phragmites the Committee can just assemble info (not really a brochure about what to do about it) and send out to TAG.
- Brian Bettencourt described a “wanted poster”, combined with info on the invasive species app.
- Action Item: Adam Burnett to draft ~1-page language re/ Phragmites as an info sheet.
- Olin Lathrop felt materials like this should be on town website too.
- Action Item: Olin Lathrop to find out how/whether we can use town website to host material.

The seventh order of business was the new app for invasive species.

- Brian Bettencourt described the app and website, found at masswoods.net/outstmart.
 - This app was merged with the IPANE effort.
 - It describes both animals and plants.
- Action Item: ALL committee members have to try out this app (vet it before describing on TAG and encouraging it's use).
- Olin Lathrop felt the people running the site are quite good, very accessible.

The eighth order of business was the review of standing (old) Action Items.

Old AI's:

Action Item: Adam Burnett to ask professional colleague about Committee membership - Pending

Action Item: Brian Bettencourt to gently inquire as to status of both our requests to get items on the selectmens' agenda; will CC group. - Done

Action Item: Brian Bettencourt to finish brochure - Done

Action Item: Adam Burnett to research cost at kinko's or staples – Pending; re-upped

Action Item: Brian Bettencourt to check west Groton for Phragmites – partially done; pending

Action Item: Olin Lathrop hiking Throne on Sunday 1 PM --> will look there for Phragmites - cancelled

Action Item: Adam Burnett to explore how to potentially get on ConsComm – cannot join; too busy.

Action Item: Adam Burnett to continue researching American Bittersweet – done some, will continue to so

The last order of business was AOB and wrap/up.

- Olin Lathrop presented photo evidence of something (porcupine) chewing bark off very large bittersweet vine.

- Olin Lathrop moved to adjourn, Adam Burnett seconded.
- The motion to adjourn passed by unanimous vote.
- The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.