

# Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

16 April 2016

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Olin Lathrop

Holly Estes

Meeting Activity:

- The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

The first order of business was the review of minutes from the 9Mar2016 meeting.

- Minor edits were made to the draft minutes live on screen.
- Olin Lathrop moved to approve the edited minutes; Holly Estes seconded. PASSED by unanimous vote.

The second order of business was membership updates.

- Adam Burnett was not in attendance so couldn't report on the person from his workplace that was interested.
- Olin Lathrop heard from Celia Silinonte, who wants to participate. She indicated Wednesdays were not great (potentially).
- Brian Bettencourt suggested to table the discussion for later when considering scheduling.

The third order of business was any Committee name/structure updates.

- No updates – all in order.

The fourth order of business was progress on applicator's licenses (with the Selectmen).

- Olin Lathrop described been leaving messages, talking to secretary for Tim Simmons at MA Wildlife – she says he never answers his phone.
- The committee felt this is unfortunate, and it's part of Simmons' job duties to respond.
- Holly Estes said to try email.
- Olin Lathrop expressed his desire for a live chat.
- Holly Estes and Brian Bettencourt agreed – try an email to set up a call and/or call earlier in the day.
- Action Item: Olin Lathrop to try these methods to reach Tim Simmons.
- Action Item: Holly Estes is writing to Maryanne Piche at MA Wildlife for other business; will mention our efforts to get in touch with Tim Simmons.

- Olin Lathrop wants to talk with Simmons about Phragmites remediation (when and how to cut and spray, what to do or not with volunteers, licensing, how much chemicals, general knowledge).
- Brian Bettencourt looked up Simmons' position on the MA Wildlife web site – he's "Restoration Ecologist".
- Brian Bettencourt felt that if Olin Lathrop is still frustrated, he should approach Simmons' supervisor.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether there had been any word from Selectmen re/ the applicator licenses?
- Olin Lathrop mentioned that Mark Haddad was still waiting on information re/ costs; that's the Tim Simmons angle. Simmons can help provide information on costs to remove Phragmites from a typical infested area.

The fifth order of business was updates on the final bittersweet brochure and report on printing costs.

- Olin Lathrop mentioned he'd sent the final portrait version to the town web staff; they still hadn't put it up. The staff also hadn't cleaned up several items on the website listed in email from Olin.
- Action Item: Olin Lathrop to send list of questions/issues re/ web site to Brian Bettencourt.
- Action Item: Brian Bettencourt to send Official Sounding Email (as chair) to town IT staff (after double checking their address), with CC to Mark Haddad, asking for help on the brochure post and web issues.
- Brian Bettencourt displayed the final brochure to Holly Estes.
- Holly Estes mentioned a desire to link bittersweet information efforts to climate change.
- Olin Lathrop and Brian Bettencourt both stated that we can discuss this and other angles on TAG – once the thread is started after posting our brochure, we can mention it there as private citizens if we'd like, but not in official capacity.
- Action Item: (remaining) Adam Burnett will report to the committee on the costs of printing the brochure.
- Action Item: Brian Bettencourt will remind Adam Burnett to check on printing costs.

The sixth order of business was Phragmites around town.

- Brian Bettencourt had no major updates but agreed to report back on the Carver's Guild area.

The seventh order of business was the New Invasive Species App.

- Action Item: Everyone on the committee agreed to try the new app, and report back next month with their thoughts.

The eighth order of business was the Review of Outstanding Action Items.

- Brian Bettencourt's new item: the Timing of committee meetings – Holly Estes expressed inability to attend many Wednesdays.

- After discussion, the committee agreed it looked like Mondays might work; the agreed it was permissible under OML okay to talk about scheduling via email.
  - Action Item: Olin Lathrop will email Celia and see if Mondays would work for her.
  - Brian Bettencourt emailed committee asking for input on best days/times.
- Olin Lathrop will keep trying to get in touch with Tim Simmons re/ attending a future meeting – action item still in progress.
- Action Item still standing – Adam Burnett to report on brochure printing costs.
- Action Item still standing – All on the committee to take pictures of any invasives around town.
  - Olin Lathrop mentioned finding adelgid in 2014; It appeared that the winter of 2014-2015 killed it back; 2015 looked clean; but now he's found what looks like partially destroyed white dots (adelgids) on hemlocks on Chestnut Hill.
  - Brian Bettencourt mentioned seeing some adelgid in late fall 2015 in the Forest Bells area – will need to double check.
  - The Committee agreed to look at the north side of Chestnut Hill.
- Brian Bettencourt produced the portrait version of the bittersweet brochure – action item done.
- Action Item still standing – Olin Lathrop to post the brochure to TAG.
- Action Item still standing – Adam Burnett to make a one page document re/ Phragmites.
- Action Item still standing – Olin Lathrop to liaise with town IT dept.

The ninth order of business was the next brochure.

- The committee discussed which would be the right species (or not) for the next brochure --- they agreed Phragmites might not be ideal.
- Holly Estes mentioned that Burning Bush and/or Barberry would be ideal. Both are plentiful, in yards, and easily controlled via digging.
- Olin Lathrop felt that Japanese Knotweed could be ideal, but is very tricky to control.
- Holly Estes felt that ornamentals would be easy.
- Action Item: Olin Lathrop to take pictures of burning bush infestations he knows of, PLUS barberry, burning bush, and honeysuckle.
- Action Item: Holly Estes to assemble info on invasive Ornamentals.
  - Brian Bettencourt felt these could be called "Invasives in Disguise" - Things in your yard that (when they escape) do damage.
  - Brian Bettencourt mentioned a common Honeysuckle shrub in his neighborhood.
    - Holly Estes described how hollow stems are the identifying characteristic of an invasive species of honeysuckle (there are several).
  - Brian Bettencourt agreed to work on a mockup of an ornamentals brochure once material from Holly Estes is in hand.

The tenth order of business was a Conservation Commission liaison.

- Adam Burnett had bowed out from consideration.
- Olin Lathrop is now a member of the ConsComm; he felt it was a good idea to coordinate committee activities with them (as well as the Trails committee).
  - He felt all of the committee should keep their eyes/ears open for opportunities for action, including site walks.

The eleventh and last order of business was Any Other Business.

- Holly Estes mentioned that she wanted to see invasives education as part of the committee's long term plan.
- Brian Bettencourt agreed, and felt that the committee should push out as many official communications as possible.
- Olin Lathrop mentioned that many folks in town don't know what many common invasive species are, but are interested.
- Brian Bettencourt felt that even efforts that don't rise to the level of brochures are valuable; small online posts are important.
- Holly Estes felt that another important role of the committee is to educate themselves; this would arm the members to best decide which site(s) to remediate and at which to rescue biodiversity.
- Olin Lathrop agreed that all should consider which species matter most; bittersweet in Cox-Walker for example would be a great starting spot.
- Brian Bettencourt described another "easy low hanging fruit" - garlic mustard.
  - Olin Lathrop agreed and felt garlic mustard is a good species for which to enlist a boy scout troop or similar volunteer group.
  - Action Item: Holly Estes to bring garlic mustard information to the next meeting.
  - Action Item: Olin Lathrop to ask Trails Committee for permission to have Invasive Species Committee Brochures at RiverFest, and have one of us there (booth coverage).

Olin Lathrop moves to adjourn the meeting; Holly Estes seconded.

The motion to adjourn passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.