

# Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

9 Jan 2017  
Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Adam Burnett

Greta Marks-Strouble

Agenda:

- 1) Review of Minutes
- 2) Japanese Knotweed brochure - review of draft and plans for finalization
- 3) Removal of White Mulberry behind Prescott school - timing and any steps after mechanical removal
- 4) Japanese Barberry - discussion of invasiveness and presence in Groton
- 5) Action items review
- 6) Any Other Business

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

The 1<sup>st</sup> order of business was Review of Minutes.

- The minutes were reviewed live on screen, and minor edits were made according to committee input.
- Adam Burnett moved to accept the corrected minutes.
  - Greta Marks-Strouble seconded.
- The motion to accept the minutes passed by unanimous vote.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> order of business was the Japanese knotweed brochure.

- The draft brochure was reviewed live on screen.
  - Typos were noted, and minor edits made live.
- The committee discussed the sourcing of photos – all agreed that only open source material should be used in the publications.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether the size of seeds were correctly noted.
  - Adam Burnett indicated they should be a little bigger.
- Adam Burnett described the history of Japanese knotweed --- at first, only females were brought over to America.
  - Brian Bettencourt said that it doesn't matter because of vegetative reproduction.
  - Adam Burnett said that for many years only females were observed – no one ever saw seeds.
  - Brian Bettencourt asked when were males introduced?
  - Adam Burnett said he wasn't sure, but not that long ago.
  - Brian Bettencourt said his research found that the plant was introduced in seed/nursery catalogs for both beauty and erosion control.

- The committee discussed similarities between the histories of Japanese knotweed and both bittersweet and hardy kiwi.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether it was okay to tell people to burn material in the brochure?
  - Adam Burnett and Greta Marks-Strouble both indicated yes.
  - Adam Burnett felt the brochure should also mention composting cut material.
  - Brian Bettencourt agreed and made the change.
- Greta Marks-Strouble asked where cover picture was taken - Lost Lake Drive?
  - Brian Bettencourt said he believed so, yes (Olin Lathrop took the picture)
- Adam Burnett felt that if a committee member took a better picture of winter stems for the Description page, that might be good.
  - Brian Bettencourt agreed, and said that if anyone took a better photo, they could email it to him and he could put into the brochure.
  - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item --- to take a picture of the Japanese knotweed stand at the end of Hayden Road.
  - Adam Burnett took an Action Item --- to take a picture of the Nod Rd. stand, next to the pumphouse for scale.
- Adam Burnett said that he can print the brochure in the town offices; he got permission for that.
- Brian Bettencourt said he could print a few at work.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether the committee should approve this version?
  - He said later revisions could be made if necessary, as indicated by a version blurb at the very bottom.
- Adam Burnett moved to approve the current version (as corrected at this meeting) for distribution immediately, to be revised if needed for future versions including possible photo change.
  - Greta Marks-Strouble seconded the motion.
  - The motion to approve the brochure passed unanimously.
- Adam Burnett: Like having the template, all brochures look similar
- Greta Marks-Strouble: like a brand ... it's Ours
- Adam Burnett: Remember we can do more than plants...

The 3<sup>rd</sup> order of business was removing the White mulberry at Prescott school.

- Brian Bettencourt said he'd received word from Mark Haddad, that the committee was officially approved to remove the tree.
  - Adam Burnett and Greta Marks-Strouble voiced their approval.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: Who wants to fire up the saw?
  - Greta Marks-Strouble said: Will do! A Hand saw is likely adequate.
  - Adam Burnett asked: Will cutting be followed with herbicide application?
  - Greta Marks-Strouble asked whether additional permission was necessary for herbicide.

- Brian Bettencourt said approval was probably not needed for Roundup, but he also took an Action Item to doublecheck with Mark Haddad that it's okay to use Roundup on the stump.
- Adam Burnett affirmed that no license is needed to apply Roundup. The area is town land, so it should be fine; just double check.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: When to remove this tree?
  - Greta Marks-Strouble proposed the coming weekend.
  - Brian Bettencourt, Greta Marks-Strouble, and Adam Burnett took an Action Item to cut down the mulberry tree (and potentially apply Roundup to the stump).
  - Adam Burnett said that Roundup wouldn't likely do much, since the stump probably won't drink up any herbicide since it's winter; however it can't hurt to try. The committee could revisit in spring to prevent stump sprouting.
- Brian Bettencourt proposed Saturday 1 PM and emailed the group including Olin Lathrop.
  - All present agreed.

The 4<sup>th</sup> order of business was the proposed Japanese barberry brochure.

- Brian Bettencourt described how Greta Marks-Strouble had sent some factoids to the group.
- Adam Burnett said that Japanese barberry is very common in Connecticut, and has a very strong musky smell when flowering.
- The committee reviewed some facts sent by Greta Marks-Strouble.
- Adam Burnett described how the plant is still being used as an ornamental even though it's banned for sale in Massachusetts.
  - Brian Bettencourt confessed to having inherited one in his front yard.
- Adam Burnett said that new growth in particular has nasty thorns.
- Greta Marks-Strouble said that ticks love it due to dense foliage.
  - Adam Burnett asked: why not any other shrub?
- The committee reviewed a University of Connecticut study that Greta Marks-Strouble had linked to.
  - Adam Burnett said that barberry is an intermediate, pioneering species common in the types of habitat in which deer love to live.
  - Brian Bettencourt said it makes sense -the deer can't eat it because of the thorns --- so it's right where the deer are but not browsed heavily.
  - Adam Burnett agreed, and indicated it tends to grow out into the paths etc., perfect for the nymphs' questing behavior.
- Brian Bettencourt said he felt the other reason why Japanese barberry is a good plant for the next brochure is that it's one plant that people can do something about - it's in their yards.
  - Adam Burnett said it's easy to kill; one can yank it right out. You just cut roots and pull, or use a weed wrench, or a rope – mechanical removal is effective at killing the whole plant. Barberry is not good at growing out of roots.

- Greta Marks-Strouble took an Action Item to look into the strength of the link between barberry and deer ticks.
  - Brian Bettencourt felt it's fine for the committee to target it either way, it's invasive and easy to get rid of.
  - Adam Burnett said all you need to do is pull before the seeds are ripe.
- Greta Marks-Strouble took an Action item to gather material for the next brochure, including text and pictures.
  - Brian Bettencourt issued a reminder about picture sourcing --- no copyrighted material is allowed.
- Adam Burnett said barberry can be tricky because it's shade tolerant --- it will "hang out" for years --- then it can pop up again as soon as you open up the canopy.
  - A good example is the infestation in J. Harry Rich forest --- old sites that were originally homesteads --- Japanese barberry is still there, in mature forest. It then springs up in timber harvest areas.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to email Olin Lathrop re/ pictures of Japanese barberry.

The 5<sup>th</sup> order was Action Item review:

- Brian Bettencourt said he'd taken care of his.
- Greta Marks-Strouble said she'd taken care of hers.
- Adam Burnett said he'd taken care of his.
- Brian Bettencourt said that Olin Lathrop had reported to him via email that he tried to contact Michelle Ruby re/ a seminar, and was waiting on her response.

The 6<sup>th</sup> order of business was Any Other Business.

- First, the committee reviewed preparation for the upcoming Conservation Summit.
  - Brian Bettencourt asked: We need to produce a paragraph introducing the committee?
  - Adam Burnett showed printouts of a draft paragraph he'd made. The material was largely taken from the website, cleaned up, and added to from original notes from the committee's first meeting. The paragraph had separate sections.
  - Brian Bettencourt said: We just have to ask Olin Lathrop if that's what the organizers are looking for.
  - Adam Burnett indicated that the Structure section, and/or Reporting section could be removed.
  - Brian Bettencourt said let's just make this paragraph right now: all that's needed was an introductory sentence and then edit the remainder.
    - The committee reviewed, and edited the material from Adam Burnett live.
    - The completed draft was emailed to the group.
    - The members agreed to take up the draft for approval at the next meeting, after Olin Lathrop had time to review.

- Brian Bettencourt took photos of each committee member and emailed them to Olin Lathrop for the summit materials.
- Greta Marks-Strouble asked, re/ the nursery website she'd found that sold Red Mulberry --- how was the site?
  - She felt that a tree would be much faster than raising from seed.
  - Brian Bettencourt agreed.
  - Adam Burnett felt Red mulberry is a great native species.
  - The nursery site had a range of sizes and prices: 4-5 feet tall was approximately \$38.
  - Adam Burnett said he would prefer a local source if possible.
  - Adam Burnett took an Action item to see if he could find any local sources for Red mulberry.
  - Brian Bettencourt said that at the next meeting, the committee could decide whether/how to buy a Red mulberry tree to replace the cut White mulberry tree at Prescott.
  - Greta Marks-Strouble said she had a couple more web sites to try.

Adam Burnett moved to adjourn.

- Greta Marks-Strouble seconded.

The meeting Adjourned at 8:26 PM.