

# Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

10 Apr 2017

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Adam Burnett

Greta Marks-Strouble

Olin Lathrop

Agenda:

- 1) Review of Minutes
- 2) Correspondence with Suzanne Goehringer @ Friends of the Trees
- 3) Red mulberry project
- 4) Brochures for Rick Muehlke
- 5) The next brochures; lack of material
- 6) Pesticide Applicator licenses updates
- 7) Phragmites eradication in Eliades Conservation Area (off Pacer Way)
- 8) Autumn Olive in Eliades Conservation Area
- 9) Woolly adelgid update
- 10) Any Other Business

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

The 1<sup>st</sup> order of business was Review of Minutes from the March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- The minutes were reviewed on screen.
- Olin Lathrop moved to accept the minutes as shown.
  - Adam Burnett seconded.
  - The motion passed unanimously.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> order of business was Correspondence with Suzanne Goehringer (Friends of the Trees) re/ native trees.

- The emails were reviewed on screen.
- Choices were discussed, and the committee agreed that red mulberry is still the best choice for replacing white mulberry.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> order of business was the Red mulberry project.

- Greta Marks-Strouble described finding a nursery website that was most likely to have pure red mulberries – unfortunately they were out of stock.
  - An alternative website had a “red” mulberry image that didn’t look exactly like red mulberry – the leaves weren’t quite right.
  - Adam Burnett described his frustration, and asked - What about seeds?

- Greta Marks-Strouble said she'd sown some in winter; no signs of life so far. Those were from Amazon.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether those seeds were sown outdoors and/or in pots, and if outdoors, were they mulched properly?
  - Greta Marks-Strouble replied no and indicated the seeds might be stale anyway.
- Brian Bettencourt asked - why not obtain cuttings?
  - Greta Marks-Strouble said that the committee could email the Arnold Arboretum, ask for cuttings – the Arboretum has an official program for dissemination of plant material.
    - Brian Bettencourt thought this was great idea, and asked what's holding it back?
    - Greta Marks-Strouble indicated that the Arboretum has an official address for propagation requests- not all are approved.
    - Brian Bettencourt said – the committee should make it an official email.
    - Greta Marks-Strouble took an Action Item to draft an email to the Arnold Arboretum requesting red mulberry cuttings, and distribute the draft to the committee.
- Olin Lathrop asked: What about red mulberries in Groton ... where are they?
  - Greta Marks-Strouble indicated that the Friends of the Trees had planted red mulberries around town, but there might be a problem: She found a blog from someone that lives in town, that has pictures of two red mulberries received from Friends of Trees, and they don't look right either! (leaves)
  - Brian Bettencourt asked - how diagnostic is that leaf shape?
  - Greta Marks-Strouble replied that all reputable sites say that Red Mulberries have leaves with trailing tips and a skinnier form.
  - Adam Burnett said – the committee can check on candidate mulberry trees in town once they leaf out.
  - Brian Bettencourt said that the committee should ask Tower Hill Botanical Garden if they have red mulberry trees from which they'd allow cutting propagation.
  - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to write to Tower Hill re/ red mulberries.

The 4<sup>th</sup> order of business was brochures for Rick Muelhke.

- Brian Bettencourt described printing another 10 of each of the three brochures for Rick.
- Olin Lathrop replied – the committee will need a lot more for RiverFest.
- Adam Burnett took an Action Item to print >10 each at Town Hall.
- Brian Bettencourt gave 10 of each brochure to Olin Lathrop to give to Rick Muelhke.

The 5<sup>th</sup> order of business was the next brochure.

- Olin Lathrop indicated he'd sent Brian Bettencourt a few burning bush pictures, without material (text) however.
- Greta Marks-Strouble said she was getting really acquainted with burning bush.
- Greta Marks-Strouble and Adam Burnett took an Action Item (held over from last meeting) to send burning bush text to Brian Bettencourt for the brochure.

- Adam Burnett volunteered to help with writing/publishing as needed.
- Adam Burnett indicated he was keeping Phragmites on his back burner, and wants it to be the “next next” brochure
- Olin Lathrop said that at his recent Keystone lecture, the brochures were well received, and someone was asking for source material – the committee should expect an email.
  - Brian Bettencourt said he can zip the (huge) source files and figure out how to send or host.

The 6<sup>th</sup> order of business was pesticide applicator licenses.

- Olin Lathrop reported that he is now an approved, official applicator.
  - The committee congratulated him.
- Adam Burnett said he was not yet licensed.
  - Olin Lathrop recommended Adam Burnett take the class to help prepare for the exam.
  - Adam Burnett replied that he just needs to study, as he has the materials in hand. He also needs to pick a date for the exam.
- Olin Lathrop said he needs to go buy a sprayer and associated equipment, then get reimbursed by the town as per the Town Manager.

The 7<sup>th</sup> order of business was Phragmites at Eliades conservation land.

- Olin Lathrop reviewed – he had an action item to write an RDA.
  - However, he was thinking about the ethics of writing an RDA when he’s on the Conservation Commission... how would he review? Would he abstain?
  - He asked the Town Clerk’s office for an ethics review.
    - The Town Clerk said he should ask the State Ethics office
    - Olin filled out a form and sent it on, and was waiting for reply. 1-2 weeks elapsed so far.
  - Brian Bettencourt asked - couldn’t Olin just abstain?
  - Olin Lathrop indicated that as the applicant, he would probably sit in the audience, not be on the commission for consideration of the application.
  - Adam Burnett asked - couldn’t someone else be the applicant?
  - Olin Lathrop replied - since he’s going to be the applicator, he wants to make sure he can explain it fully.
    - Olin Lathrop said he will follow up with the state, and make sure that by next meeting he will have written RDA.
      - If there is no response from the State then, perhaps another member of the Committee could be the applicant.

The 8<sup>th</sup> order of business was Autumn olive at Eliades.

- Olin Lathrop said the question was - which invasive does the committee really want to handle at Eliades?
  - The Conservation Commission is considering getting MacGregor to mow the area ... that would keep Autumn olive stunted.
- Adam Burnett asked - what would it take to kill it?
  - Olin Lathrop responded – glyphosate.

- One area of Autumn olive at Eliades is still small enough that the brush hog could do it. The other side of the ditch (near trail head) has plants that are too big for brush hog, and would need chemical control.
- Olin Lathrop said – the Conservation Commission maybe has forgotten about this... the Committee could write a letter to Conservation Commission saying we want to assist here.
- Olin Lathrop checked out whether there were any conservation restrictions on the land – there are none.
- Adam Burnett suggested the committee focus on Phragmites first.
- Brian Bettencourt asked - cutting Autumn olive will be chainsaws then herbicide?
  - Olin Lathrop indicated that was correct.
- Olin Lathrop said – the committee could work on Autumn olive now.
- Olin Lathrop moved to authorize Brian Bettencourt to send a letter to the Conservation Commission administrator offering our cooperation in removing Autumn olive from Eliades conservation area, near the trail head, by Pacer Way.
  - Adam Burnett seconded.
  - The motion passed unanimously.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to email [conservation@townofgroton.org](mailto:conservation@townofgroton.org) re/ Autumn olive at Eliades.
  - Say the committee would like to talk about it first.
    - Figure out best strategy and plan (together)...
    - Provide a licensed applicator...
    - Provide labor too...
  - Basically, suggest the Committee get on the Conservation Commission meeting agenda to discuss.
- Brian Bettencourt said he would probably end up appearing before Conservation Commission at one of their meetings (2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays).
- Adam Burnett described his experience with Autumn olive:
  - Cuttings are safe to dispose of. Stumps definitely sprout, that's what herbicide is for.
- Olin Lathrop indicated the Committee could work to control Autumn olive in the spring ... then in fall when coming back to work on Phragmites, could hit Autumn olive again if necessary.
- Adam Burnett said the Committee could let cut material dry out, or burn.

The 9<sup>th</sup> order of business was a Woolly Adelgid update.

- Olin Lathrop said he'd been trying to contact a tree expert in Holden, and a researcher in Connecticut ... two emails were out, no responses.
- Olin Lathrop said the committee needs a better contact re/ wooly adelgid.
- Brian Bettencourt emails Roy Van Driesche (live) about who would be good to contact.
- Olin Lathrop said – he could also talk to Keystone folks.

The 10<sup>th</sup> order of business was Any Other Business:

- The committee reviewed action items from the previous meeting:
  - Olin Lathrop reported on the Hurd property --- he found out there are no Conservation Restrictions there.

- Adam Burnett described his progress on the pesticide applicator test and gathering Phragmites research material.
- Brian Bettencourt and Greta Marks-Strouble described emailing the Friends of Trees re/ mulberry.
- The committee then reviewed Action Items from the current meeting:
  - Greta Marks-Strouble will draft an email to Arnold Arboretum requesting red mulberry cuttings.
  - Brian Bettencourt will write to Tower Hill Botanical Garden re/ red mulberries.
  - Adam Burnett will print >10 of each brochure at Town Hall.
  - Greta Marks-Strouble and Adam Burnett will send burning bush text to Brian Bettencourt.
  - Brian Bettencourt will email [conservation@townofgroton.org](mailto:conservation@townofgroton.org) re/ Autumn Olive at Eliades
  - The Action Items were emailed to the Committee members.

Adam Burnett moved to adjourn the meeting.

- Olin Lathrop seconded.
- The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM.