

Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

15 May 2017

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Adam Burnett

Olin Lathrop

Visitor Present:

Richard Hewitt

Agenda:

- 1) Review of Minutes from previous meeting
- 2) Correspondence with Littleton Conservation Trust and Mendon Land Use Committee
- 3) Progress on Burning Bush / Phragmites brochures
- 4) Report from Conservation Commission meeting on Autumn Olive removal at Eliades land
- 5) Next steps re/ Eliades: site walk on May 20th, and beyond
- 6) Movement on red mulberries project
- 7) Progress on pesticide applicator licenses
- 8) Any Other Business

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.

The 1st order of business was Review of Minutes from the 10 April 2017 meeting.

- The minutes were reviewed on screen.
 - Some minor edits were made.
- Olin Lathrop moved to accept the minutes as edited.
 - Adam Burnett seconded.
 - Motion passed unanimously.

The 2nd order of business was Correspondence with Littleton and Mendon.

- Brian Bettencourt reviewed recent email correspondence with conservation groups in Littleton and Mendon.
 - Littleton: a gentleman contacted Bettencourt. This person had prior history with Olin Lathrop.
 - The Littleton folks want to cooperate on future projects.
 - Mendon: Brian Bettencourt sent them the Committee's brochures, modified to replace "Groton" with "Massachusetts".
- Olin Lathrop showed the brochures to Richard Hewitt live onscreen.
 - The website was displayed live on screen; only bittersweet was up online.

Richard Hewitt suggested sending the brochures to the Groton Conservation Commission and Conservation Trust.

- Olin Lathrop responded that was already done.
- Adam Burnett added that he'd like to also post the brochure in the "vertical page format" online.
- Brian Bettencourt took an action item to reformat the Japanese knotweed and barberry brochures for the screen, and send PDFs to Town Clerk IT for posting. Also, he agreed to ask IT to post the standard folded format as separate links.

The 3rd order of business was progress on the Burning Bush / Phragmites brochures.

- Brian Bettencourt reported that he'd heard from Greta Marks-Strouble: She'd drafted most of the material the burning bush brochure, and sent some images too.
 - Brian Bettencourt took an action item to draft the burning bush brochure before the next meeting and share with the Committee.
- Olin Lathrop said it'd be good to have ~100 of each brochure printed prior to Riverfest (mid-June).
 - Adam Burnett took an action item to print some out in Town Hall.
 - Richard Hewitt said another good place to print documents is at the Town Library.
 - Adam Burnett said he would ask after the Riverfest.
- Brian Bettencourt asked – was there any movement on Phragmites brochure material (by Adam Burnett)?
 - Olin Lathrop replied no, not yet.
 - Brian Bettencourt said - don't feel pressured! Just send brief blurbs for the paragraphs.
 - Adam Burnett indicated that he was currently working (with the Army Corps) on one of the biggest Phragmites infestations in the state --- Mill Pond in Littleton (495 and route 2).

The 4th order of business was the Conservation Commission meeting regarding the Eliades land.

- Brian Bettencourt reported on his appearance before the Commission.
 - He introduced the Committee, charge, and work.
 - He Introduced the project and the site.
 - The Commission positively received the presentation.
 - They discussed the possibility of cooperative work.
 - They suggested a site walk on Saturday May 20.
 - Olin Lathrop said at this site walk, we can talk about what our committee can do.
 - Brian Bettencourt reminded the group that the site walk would not be a public meeting, so no deliberation was allowed.
 - Richard Hewitt said yes, but fact finding is okay.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked whether it'd be okay to bring his son.
 - Olin Lathrop said that'd be fine, as long as he was not disruptive.
 - Brian Bettencourt said that Greta Marks-Strouble indicated in email that she could come.

The 5th order of business was Eliades – Autumn olive, Phragmites and beyond.

- Olin Lathrop reviewed the Autumn olive and Phragmites project with Richard Hewitt.

- Olin Lathrop said the RDA was filed with the Conservation Commission - to treat the Phragmites w/ herbicide
- Olin Lathrop reviewed Phragmites control methods with Richard Hewitt.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: do you ever plan for cattail re-seeding?
 - Adam Burnett replied: if there is any source of cattail around, it will re-seed. He has had good success in the past at other sites.
- Olin Lathrop said the Eliades site is great because there is cattail there, plus the Phragmites stand is small and tractable.
 - Brian Bettencourt said: since the likely control method is bunch, cut, and local spray, we won't be killing much/all of the cattail – there should be plenty to spread.
 - Adam Burnett asked: will Phragmites be in seed when the Committee cuts in the fall? Is that seed viable?
 - Brian Bettencourt and Olin Lathrop indicated they weren't sure.
 - Olin Lathrop said: the Committee will definitely have to make >1 application.
 - Adam Burnett mused on the seed (tops) whether to burn or mulch.
 - Olin Lathrop indicated that the Conservation Commission will discuss removal at their next meeting.
 - Adam Burnett asked whether Olin Lathrop has to recuse himself.
 - Olin Lathrop said No, since he is on >1 committee, there is no conflict of interest according to town guidelines.
- Brian Bettencourt asked, regarding the site walk: is there no plan necessary?
 - Olin Lathrop said no, we'll just discuss ideas.
 - Adam Burnett reminded the Committee: No decisions were to be made at the site walk.

The 6th order of business was the Red mulberry project.

- Greta Marks-Strouble emailed to the Arnold Arboretum; they said the Committee can come take several cuttings.
 - Olin Lathrop said he was pleasantly surprised.
 - Adam Burnett asked as to a source of rooting hormone.
 - Brian Bettencourt said he has some.
 - Brian Bettencourt reviewed Greta Marks-Strouble's correspondence with Arnold Arboretum.
 - Brian Bettencourt said that next steps were --- write to curatorial assistant and arrange pickup of cuttings.
 - Brian Bettencourt indicated he works relatively close by.
 - Brian Bettencourt took an action item to coordinate with Greta Marks-Strouble to visit the Arboretum and grab the cuttings.
 - Adam Burnett said - make sure that actual trees at Arnold Arboretum are examined and verified likely pure Red.

The 7th order of business was Pesticide applicator licenses.

- Adam Burnett said he'd been studying, and received a list of test times (with plenty left from spring through December).
- Olin Lathrop indicated he wanted to proceed with buying equipment.

- He asked around, including Rick Finley in Littleton, as to where to buy.
- He tried Griffin's in Tewksbury.
 - He was disappointed in the storefront.
 - Brian Bettencourt replied - it's for the trade only, not really for the public.
 - Olin Lathrop said he'd received a disappointing response; the Griffin's folks were not good salespeople.
 - Adam Burnett asked whether Olin Lathrop had tried Agway.
- Olin Lathrop said he was still researching equipment on the internet (which is the best backpack sprayer, which has the features needed, etc.)
 - He was talking with Rick Muehlke, Rick Finley.
 - He wanted to have an apron to protect waist/legs from material.
 - Good sprayers (~\$120) are motorized, and not too expensive.
 - Olin Lathrop took an action item to acquire a backpack sprayer, chemical gloves, glyphosate, and an apron for under the sprayer.
 - Brian Bettencourt recommended trying Gempler's.
 - Olin Lathrop said it was likely that Amazon is fine.

The 8th order of business was Any Other Business.

- The Committee discussed the upcoming RiverFest.
- Adam Burnett said he was on the organizing committee, would be very busy, and thus couldn't man the table that day.
- Brian Bettencourt said the Fest is Sunday June 11th.
- Olin Lathrop asked - Which booth should the Committee man?
- Adam Burnett said – the Trails Committee has a booth, that'd be a natural to split.
 - Olin Lathrop said he'd formally request to Trails that the Committee can have brochures and a person at their booth.
 - Olin Lathrop moved to formally contact the Trails Committee and ask to share their booth.
 - Adam Burnett seconded.
 - The motion Passed unanimously.
 - Olin Lathrop took an action item to officially ask to share the booth at the next Trails Committee meeting.
- Brian Bettencourt said that after the Eliades work – a large stand of knotweed down on Hayden Road extension (old fire road) would be great to take out. It would be a tough project.
 - Olin Lathrop agreed, and said another good place would be along Lost Lake Dr. / route 40.
- Olin Lathrop led a discussion on tall grass(?) in a kettle pond off Martins Pond road.
 - The Committee reviewed pictures on screen.
 - Olin Lathrop indicated he had a sample.
 - He also agreed to take closeup photos.
 - Olin Lathrop took an action item to bring the plant sample on the Eliades site walk, and give it to Brian Bettencourt
 - Brian Bettencourt could give the sample to Dennis Magee for identification.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked - what's the location of the site if Dennis needs it?

- Olin Lathrop said he would email the latitude/longitude to Brian Bettencourt (42.62825 N, 71.52621 W).
 - The site is part of NEFF Wharton Plantation, and visible from the road.
 - The Committee reviewed it live on screen (Google Maps).

- Olin Lathrop moved to adjourn.
 - Adam Burnett seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.