

Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

26 Mar 2018

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Richard Hewitt

Olin Lathrop

Greta Marks-Strouble

Adam Burnett

Agenda:

- 1) Review of minutes from last meeting
- 2) Emerald Ash Borer seminar - preparation and publicity
- 3) Update on communications and projects with Conservation Commission
- 4) Progress report on latest brochures
- 5) iNaturalist talk and ideas for our committee
- 6) Action items review
- 7) Any Other Business

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

The first order of business was a review of minutes from the 5Mar2018 meeting.

- The minutes were reviewed live on screen.
- Edits were suggested by the Committee members.
- Olin Lathrop moved to accept the minutes as edited.
 - Greta Marks-Strouble seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

The second order of business was the Emerald Ash Borer seminar on April 11th.

- Olin Lathrop described the basics of the event: Doors open at 6, presentation starts at 7. He mentioned that he would bring cookies and juice.
 - Brian Bettencourt said he also would bring some treats.
- Brian Bettencourt asked that Greta Marks-Strouble bring stacks of the brochures.
 - Adam Burnett asked if the Committee needed more printed yet.
 - Brian Bettencourt indicated no, not yet.
 - Olin Lathrop said that he felt the Committee should ask if more folks want the brochures.
 - Greta Marks-Strouble indicated that she'd taken some to the Conservation Summit.
- Brian Bettencourt asked that Committee members remind him to make an attendance sheet for the seminar.

- Brian Bettencourt said he'd already written to the Groton Herald – they'd already put the talk description in the back.
 - Olin Lathrop said he was going to wait till closer to the event.
 - Olin Lathrop said he would send a publicity announcement again, to Talk About Groton, the week before the seminar.
 - Brian Bettencourt indicated that he'd ask the Groton Herald editor to repeat the post.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to ask the town webmaster to post a special meeting announcement and advertisement of the seminar.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether the speaker's AV requirements were taken care of.
 - Olin Lathrop said he would ask him closer to the seminar date.
- Greta Marks-Strouble mentioned as an aside – she had totally lost a tree to EAB in her yard.
 - Adam Burnett asked whether she'd found any insects.
 - Olin Lathrop said that D-shaped exit holes are diagnostic.
 - Greta Marks-Strouble replied that that's what she saw; smaller than a pea. The tree died several years ago. There are several similar trees in her yard.
 - Brian Bettencourt said to make sure to tell the speaker, and ask about year(s) of EAB introduction in this area.
 - Brian Bettencourt said don't forget, there are other ash borer insects besides EAB.
 - Brian Bettencourt and the Committee had a brief discussion re/ biocontrol.

The third order of business was an update on Conservation Commission activities.

- Brian Bettencourt asked - what happened with the Community Preservation Commission letter - he had received a few notes of thanks.
 - Olin Lathrop indicated – the letter was put in to the application.
 - Olin Lathrop also mentioned that the Community Preservation Commission was meeting that night to work on the applications.
- Brian Bettencourt inquired as to the Status of the Chestnut proposal.
 - Olin Lathrop replied: It had went through one round of revision ... the Conservation Commission hadn't had a chance to revisit just yet. There was no urgency on this right now; nothing happening on that parcel just yet.
 - Adam Burnett and Greta Marks-Strouble asked: But what if the Committee wants to start planting and other activities in the near term?
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: Or protect the trees that are already there?
 - Olin Lathrop said: The Committee can always ask for specific permission for individual project(s).
 - Adam Burnett said the Committee can keep researching where to obtain seedlings, saplings, etc.
- Brian Bettencourt asked for the status of mowing at Eliades area: timing and money.
 - Olin Lathrop said he'd talked to Nik about the Pacer Way meadow; he didn't want Autumn Olive to go through another growing season. The mowing budget is spent for now.
 - However, town meeting is going to try to move some money around. Since Takashi's salary was higher than Nik's, there may be around \$4000 available.

- The question is, can mowing be done in the spring, given the animal species (birds, amphibians, etc.) in the area.
- Greta Marks-Strouble indicated that spring is generally a good time.
- Olin Lathrop sent an email to Nik (live at the meeting) to look into the best time to mow in spring, given the animal life in the parcel of which to be mindful.
- Greta Marks-Strouble indicated that she wanted to clarify something she'd said at the last meeting – Invasive plant species in our area (in those types of habitats) tend to be cool season, whereas natives tend to be warm season.
 - Adam Burnett said that it varies, but agreed that was a general trend.

The fourth item of business was progress on brochures.

- Adam Burnett said he still doesn't have new material.
- Greta Marks-Strouble said she finished the multiflora rose brochure material that afternoon.
 - Got a little long
 - Brian Bettencourt said he would edit.
- Greta Marks-Strouble took an Action Item to send Brian Bettencourt the multiflora rose material.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to put into that material into the template and bring along to the next meeting.

The fifth item of business was the iNaturalist talk, and relevance for the Committee.

- Olin Lathrop said he felt the talk was good, but the speaker had to talk to a general audience so specific questions were tough.
- Brian Bettencourt asked if it was well attended.
 - Olin Lathrop said 20-25ish attended.
- Olin Lathrop said after the talk, the group went to the Groton School grounds, and practiced putting some observations up.
- Olin Lathrop said he noticed Japanese barberry, multiflora rose and bittersweet all down by the stream to which they walked.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether there was any interest in making a specific invasive Project, or just piggybacking on the Nature of Groton project.
 - Olin Lathrop said he felt it might make sense to do an Invasives of Groton project, specifically to find/map invasives - give people a means to report them.
 - Olin Lathrop asked the speaker whether the Committee can we put a list of species in the app, such that any observations of those species AUTOMATICALLY goes into the project.
 - It does indeed work that way – sort of.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: Does a group like the Committee have to ask the admins for such auto-import?
 - Olin Lathrop said no - if you define the polygon (area) for your project, any observations in that geographic area automatically get added to your Project.
 - However, he didn't know whether the Committee could provide a list of defined invasive species.

- Brian Bettencourt said that the Committee should ask the admins/help for the app; it makes good sense to have a subset of species so users don't have to decide/know whether a species is invasive or not.
 - Olin Lathrop said that there's a google group for help...
 - Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to write to google group (etc.) to find out whether/how a controlled list of species can be specified for auto-import into a Project.
- The Committee discussed the website and demo'd it live, using Olin Lathrop's photos. They also compared the phone app vs. computer software (full web site).
 - In general, the desire was for prospectively gathered data, for a new project.
 - Brian Bettencourt said he felt it was only worth doing if the Committee can control the list of species; he didn't want to take away from the Groton Conservation Trust's project.

The sixth item of business was Action Item Review.

- Brian Bettencourt said that he did the Community Preservation Commission letter.
- Brian Bettencourt reported that he'd done the brochure edits, but hadn't uploaded to the website.
 - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to find the original bittersweet Portrait document for the edits.
- Greta Marks-Strouble said she'd finished the multiflora rose material.
- Olin Lathrop said preparation for the EAB speaker was well under way.
- Olin Lathrop said, regarding the Nod Road knotweed: He'd went by and looked. The knotweed runs from the Water Dept. building to the left. He'd checked the map, and was fairly sure that all the knotweed is entirely within town property (the knotweed doesn't go all the way to Nod Brook, and the boundary for the State Forest is a bit past the brook).
 - He also checked – there are no wetlands nearby. Nothing within 100', not even close. So, there should be no worries about permitting there.
- Olin Lathrop said he would talk to Tom Delaney (Highway Dept.) once plans were ready.
 - Olin Lathrop also said that actually, he'd mentioned it to him last week.
- Adam Burnett said he thought the Committee should do chop and drip application of herbicide when the knotweed was a fairly young stand and actively growing.
 - Olin Lathrop agreed.

The seventh item of business was Any Other Business.

- Brian Bettencourt inquired as to the timing of meetings; it'd been tough with travel, vacations, etc.
- Brian Bettencourt asked - what about April? Olin Lathrop and Brian Bettencourt would both be away 3rd Monday of April.
 - Olin Lathrop said – a meeting could still happen ... there's a quorum with 3 people.
- Adam Burnett said – there was still going to be the 11th (the seminar).
 - That is a public meeting, so if the Committee needed to conduct other business, it could be officially done at that meeting.
 - Olin Lathrop agreed. The Town Clerk needed to know this when posting the meeting.

- Brian Bettencourt said – the Committee agrees – there would be no regular meeting in April (3rd Monday); instead any necessary business could be conducted at the 11Apr special meeting.
 - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to have the Town Clerk post the meeting, starting at 6 PM.
- Greta Marks-Strouble mentioned she had good news – her red mulberry sapling is alive. A tiny leaf was sprouting.
- Brian Bettencourt said – make sure to harden it off the right way.
- Olin Lathrop asked - that other ash tree that Greta Marks-Strouble mentioned ... was it worth taking pictures?
 - Greta Marks-Strouble said it was right next to her neighbor's property – she was hesitant to poke around.
 - Olin Lathrop asked - Could you ask your neighbor?
 - Adam Burnett reported that he'd also found an ash tree doing poorly on Arlington St. There is a bunch of ash all along that little stream valley; native, but not doing so well. There's also alot along Mill st., but all are declining; the tops are dying out. All of these are white ash.

Adam Burnett moved to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.