

# Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

18Nov19  
Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt  
Olin Lathrop  
Richard Hewitt

Other attendees:

Rick Muehlke  
Jonathan Basch

Agenda:

- 1) Review of minutes from last meeting
- 2) Membership update
- 3) Report on Nod Rd. knotweed
- 4) Report on Eliades land Phragmites and mowing activities
- 5) Seminar series - attendance, reception, and followup items
- 6) Report on Parks dept. meeting
- 7) Action Items review
- 8) Any Other Business

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

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

- The draft minutes were reviewed live on screen.
- Minor changes were made.
- Olin Lathrop moved to approve the minutes as amended.
  - Richard Hewitt seconded.
- The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The second order of business was membership update.

- Ali Hamilton emailed in sick tonight – says she still wants to be a member of the Committee.
  - Brian Bettencourt emailed her about Town Hall procedure for membership.
- Brian Bettencourt reported that he'd added all the new email addresses to the google group announcement list (invite).
  - He'd heard from Beth Yafrate – she signed up.
- Olin Lathrop asked: did you announce the meeting on the list?
  - Brian Bettencourt: I did not – what's the procedure there?

- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to start emailing the whole announcement list regarding every meeting.
- Olin Lathrop mentioned that the new town hall website will automatically send you minutes, meeting notices, and more.
  - Each individual person has to sign up there – check off all the committees/groups etc. you want to hear about.
- Brian Bettencourt invited Rick Muehlke and Jonathan Basch to the invasive species google group, live.

The third item of business was a report on Nod Rd. Knotweed.

- Olin Lathrop said that since it's wintertime, there's nothing going on right now.
  - The last pictures of the plot were taken in the fall.
- The Committee reviewed the process – discussing the plots and what was done to each one.
  - The first cut was in May (some plots only).
  - The first herbicide applications were in June.
  - Some follow up applications were done in August.
- The Committee reviewed and discussed the plans for each plot.
- Next, the Committee viewed photos taken in late September.
  - Control plants were clearly visible in the back. Those are up to 10-12 feet tall.
- Rick Muehlke asked: Is triclopyr considered an early season herbicide?
  - Olin Lathrop replied: No, it just has a different mechanism of action.
  - Brian Bettencourt added: it's stickier.
- The plots which were cut and drip (herbicide) in the spring: Those plants are good and dead.
  - Some plants escaped –the application was missed, most likely.
- Virginia Creeper is evident in Plot 8.
  - Olin Lathrop marked the boundary between the species with stakes; he will see if it moves.
- Rick Muehlke asked: This land is owned by the town, but managed by the Water dept?
  - Olin Lathrop replied: This is town land, but it's not managed by the Water dept. Just town land. It's not the actual pump station footprint.
- Jonathan Basch asked: What happens next year?
  - Olin Lathrop replied: Before the knotweed starts to grow up, we will cut all the dead sticks back.
  - Brian Bettencourt added: This will be key to see what lived and what didn't.
  - Olin Lathrop mentioned that it looks like cut and spray in May didn't do much!
    - Brian Bettencourt said that was a very early treatment.
  - Cut and drip looked good.
  - The Committee agreed to come up with a further plan over this winter.
- Olin Lathrop emailed Rick Muehlke the details of the plots and treatments for his review.
- Brian Bettencourt reviewed the controls, and how we can replicate treatments in next years' batch.

- Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to determine the volume of herbicide dispensed per cycle of the sprayer motor on the application apparatus.

The fourth item of business was a Report on Eliades land Phragmites and mowing activities.

- Brian Bettencourt reviewed what was done last year and this past summer as well.
  - Autumn olive and phragmites were both cut/treated.
  - Just phragmites was treated this past summer.
- Olin Lathrop said: It didn't look like the bend-over and spray technique caused much phragmites death.
  - Brian Bettencourt said it looked brown to him, while reviewing pictures live on screen.
    - It was tough to say what was brown due to the season when the pictures were taken (Oct 16<sup>th</sup>) vs. due to treatment.
- The Committee discussed the rhizomatous spreading of phragmites.
- Brian Bettencourt said: We'd predict fewer green shoots in the spring, and a less dense stand.
- Olin Lathrop said he would like to see what would happen if the Committee repeated treatment a couple times throughout the summer.
- The Committee discussed looking at the phragmites in the spring.
- Olin Lathrop added that the other plot – East of where the Committee treated before (between Pacer Way and Ayer town line) was MOWED. John Smiegelski came and mowed it; primarily for Autumn Olive.
  - Brian Bettencourt asked: repeated mowing will be needed right?
  - Olin Lathrop replied Yes – to exhaust the roots.
- The entire area needs to be checked out in the Spring for efficacy.
- Brian Bettencourt asked whether there was any chance of spring mowing, or if that was a no-go because of nesting birds.
  - Olin Lathrop replied: Between mud and birds ... it's a really tough schedule.
  - Rick Muehlke asked: Are birds really an issue?
  - Olin Lathrop described how Natural Heritage had identified the area as possible habitat. There was not an actual sighting.
    - The Committee discussed the area and reviewed the plot plan live on screen.
- Olin Lathrop mentioned that the Committee will still need to cut/treat autumn olive in and around the ditches.
  - Brian Bettencourt agreed – saying it should be done in the spring.
- Rick Muehlke asked: How did Natural Heritage get involved anyway?
  - Olin Lathrop described how a management plan from Conservation Commission was reviewed by the state.

The fifth item of business was the Seminar series - attendance, reception, and followup items.

- Olin Lathrop described how 20-25 people attended each time. A core of 1/3 of attendees hit all seminars.
- Richard Hewitt asked if the series would repeat in the spring.

- Olin Lathrop said he felt that was too soon.
- Brian Bettencourt said that 20-25 is great attendance.
- Olin Lathrop said that next Fall, he would like to talk about the projects that the Committee has done and what has been learned.
- Olin Lathrop said he felt that in general, he thought it went well.
  - Ali's attendance at a meeting was a direct result of seminar.
- Olin Lathrop added that in future years, he would do wrapups of the year's activities.
- Brian Bettencourt added that Olin Lathrop could also do talks on species that haven't been covered.
  - Olin Lathrop agreed, and said he'd covered knotweed, bittersweet, and Emerald Ash Borer; there are plenty more to cover in depth if need be.
- Rick Muehlke asked whether he'd been involved with Tom Delaney?
  - Olin Lathrop said that he was interested, but hasn't helped directly.
  - Brian Bettencourt mentioned that Tom Delaney had coordinated with the Committee on Emerald Ash Borer.
  - Olin Lathrop agreed and said that Tom Delaney is super busy; he's supposed to get back to the Committee re/ ash trees.
  - Rick Muehlke said: Go to shepley hill – there are lots of ash trees there.
    - He's not sure of infestation status.
    - The Groton Conservation Trust was approached by Smith, an abutter. He wants more cutting on that land, including ash.
- The Committee had a discussion re/ which public forest lands are getting timber cuts and which are not.

The sixth item of business was the Park Commission meeting.

- Adam Burnett was the designated attendee for that meeting.
  - He was not in attendance (at this Committee meeting).
- Rick Muehlke asked: What was the purpose of the meeting?
  - Olin Lathrop replied: To find out about ash trees, etc.
- Olin Lathrop asked: What about Groton Conservation Trust land? What's the legality there? Should the Committee treat plants there?
  - Brian Bettencourt said: A non-profit is different than Town land.
  - Olin Lathrop said – we're not even sure if legally the Committee can (work on GCT land for example).
- Olin Lathrop added that he'd heard about Emerald Ash Borer in ash trees along Long Hill Road – that is New England Forestry Foundation land.
  - Rick Muehlke said he hadn't heard.

The seventh item was an Action Items review from last mtg.

- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to write to Lisa Murray again re/ Garden Club, and asked if they want to come to a meeting.
- Olin Lathrop handled the lecture series.
- Brian Bettencourt advertised the seminars.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to get in touch with Dennis Magee for Adam Burnett (identification of plants).
- Adam Burnett successfully got on the Parks Comm. Agenda.

The eighth item was Any Other Business.

- Olin Lathrop mentioned that the Conservation Commission tried to get a grant to buy 40 acres near Martins Pond, towards the cemetery. They did not get the grant.
  - The Trimper property.
  - There is a large amount of Asian Bittersweet up there, along with other invasives on top of the hill.
- Olin Lathrop said that the Conservation Commission is still pursuing the parcel. They would love to see it as public land.
  - This is especially the case now that Brooks Orchard is in a No Trespassing mode under New owners.

Richard Hewitt moved to adjourn.

Olin Lathrop seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.