

Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

17Feb2020

Legion Hall

Committee Members Present:

Brian Bettencourt

Olin Lathrop

Jonathan Basch

Adam Burnett

Other attendees:

Agenda:

- 1) Review of minutes from last meeting
- 2) Membership updates
- 3) Report on Climate Change Resiliency Workshop
- 4) Report on Groton Conservation Trust meeting
- 5) Upcoming Conservation Summit
- 6) Plans for knotweed at Hayden Rd and recent site visit
- 7) Autumn Olive brochure final draft review
- 8) Any Other Business

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

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

- The minutes were reviewed live on screen.
- Edits were made following discussion.
- Olin Lathrop moved to approve.
 - Adam Burnett seconded.
- The minutes were approved as edited.

The second order of business was Membership updates.

- Brian Bettencourt: Jonathan Basch has joined us officially.
 - Olin Lathrop: He's on the website.
 - Jonathan Basch: Called a couple times, it's now official. Still need to be sworn in.
 - Olin Lathrop: Until sworn in, you can't officially vote.
- Olin Lathrop asked: What about Alison Hamilton?
 - Brian Bettencourt replied: She didn't turn in the Interest form yet- since I didn't get the email from Town Hall.
 - Olin Lathrop said that he'd sent her the form.

- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to email Alison Hamilton and ask her about her membership status.

The third order of business was a report on the Climate Change resiliency workshop.

- Adam Burnett said that the workshop was interesting - a lot of people were there – a diverse group.
 - The Central or “Core” Committee was mostly Town employees.
 - There is also a broader advisory type committee that will meet only once or twice.
 - Adam represented the Invasive Species Committee and the Groton Greenway.
 - The state had hired a consultant; they came in.
 - They broke into working subgroups. The charge was to brainstorm about what the inputs might be after Extreme Events in Groton – what would be affected – and what we could do about it.
- Adam Burnett said that he’d brought up Invasive Species as one of the big change elements.
 - Specifically, what we consider “invasive” might be really natives as they creep North.
 - We might have to change what we do for some of these species.
 - They talked about corridors of protection, flooding.
 - Small drainages like local brooks that are “flashy”; these aren’t reflected in FEMA maps --- that’s where the flood trouble will be.
 - The town could perhaps write its own standards and codify them, re/ flooding.
- Adam Burnett also indicated that the group talked about need for money – good grant application prospect – to control invasives.
 - The Core group is going to be putting together grant applications.
 - Invasive Species money is there, for eradication efforts.
 - Olin Lathrop asked: Are these grants from the state, i.e. the MVP program?
 - Adam Burnett replied: Yes. They are smallish-scale things. Lots of money is available.
 - They would be perfect for the Committee – links to climate change, small tractable projects.
 - Brian Bettencourt said: Losing native species will make the landscapes less resilient.
 - Adam Burnett agreed, and said a good example is this new invasive worm that removes all the leaf litter.
 - The Committee had a discussion re/ the new Jumping Worm, which was brought in as a composting aid.
 - The group also talked a lot about Ash trees and the Emerald Ash Borer.
 - Lots of Ash trees are in the right of way.
 - Many are beyond help. This is a huge issue for the town; they’re going to be taking out power lines.
 - Olin Lathrop said: This might be a great project for Alison’s students --- find all the Ash trees in town, see where they are in relation to lot lines. Catalog which ones we can treat.
- The core group is in charge of producing the main document for public review.

- Brian Bettencourt said: So, this is a great opportunity for Invasive Species Committee to apply for grants.
 - Adam Burnett agreed, and added that they are on the order of \$10K.
 - Brian Bettencourt asked: What's the mechanism for applying?
 - Adam Burnett replied: The Core Committee will come up with the list of grants.
 - Adam Burnett took an Action Item to reach out to Takashi and Nik at the Climate Change Core Committee and let them know that the Committee would like to follow up and apply for grants under the MVP program.

The fourth order of business was a report on the Groton Conservation Trust meeting.

- Brian Bettencourt said that he was on the Advisory Committee, and so went to the Annual Meeting.
 - There was a lot of talk about the theme – Climate Change and managing the Trust properties for change. Invasive Species were a big theme.
 - He tried to provide advice and tips there.
 - David Black spoke --- and his was a perfect lecture topic for the Invasive Species Committee series.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: Should I invite David Black to come give the Committee seminar?
 - Adam Burnett said: Yes, absolutely.
 - Olin Lathrop agreed, and added that David Black is a good guy and a good speaker.
 - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to invite David Black to give a Committee public seminar about Invasive Species and Climate Change in Groton.
 - Adam Burnett and Olin Lathrop discussed posting the seminar as a regular meeting, and proceeding as was done for past seminars.
- The Committee discussed changes in Groton, especially re/ wetlands, in years to come.

The fifth order of business was the upcoming Conservation Summit.

- Olin Lathrop reported that the Summit is on the Last Thursday in February, at the Groton [Senior] Center. 6:30 PM.
- Brian Bettencourt said: I will be in California.
- Jonathan Basch said: I will be in Florida.
- Olin Lathrop and Adam Burnett indicated that they would attend.
 - Olin Lathrop will be moderating.
 - Adam Burnett can give the Committee update.
 - Major accomplishments:
 - Completed 1st year of Knotweed Control study on Nod Rd.
 - Confirmed Emerald Ash Borer in Groton, got equipment to treat trees, Inoculated numerous Ash Trees.
 - Conducted Phragmites control at Eliades.
 - Conducted Black Swallowwort control at Shattuck.
 - Continued to expand brochure portfolio to six species.
 - Gave a Lecture series at the Library.

- Brian Bettencourt sent Olin Lathrop and Adam Burnett the above bullet list and a reminder to attend.

The sixth order of business was Plans for Knotweed at Hayden Rd. and the recent site visit.

- Olin Lathrop did a formal request of permission to Conservation Commission.
- Brian Bettencourt was present at the Site Walk.
 - The Conservation Committee asked for a brief write up of the methods.
 - Olin Lathrop sent a brief message to Conservation Commission with the methodology for control.
- Olin Lathrop said: Conservation Commission should take it up at their next meeting.
- Brian Bettencourt added: We'd be on track to treat in late May or early June.
- Olin Lathrop said he would also ask Jack Petropolous if he can help get into the Hayden site and weed whack all the dead stems this spring.
- Adam Burnett asked: Do we know if that's the best technique?
 - Olin Lathrop replied: No, but we know it's good to get rid of the old dead sticks so we can see what to chop and treat!
 - Olin Lathrop said: The Committee should do cut-and-drip.
 - Adam Burnett agreed, saying the technique was effective and cost-effective.
 - Olin Lathrop added: Follow up in fall will use a foliar spray, like what was done on Nod Rd. stand.

The seventh order of business was the Autumn Olive brochure final draft review.

- The Committee reviewed the brochure live on screen.
- Brian Bettencourt indicated that he'd included one of Olin's pictures in the new draft.
- The Committee conducted their final review of the brochure live on screen; a few edits were made.
- Olin Lathrop moved to approve brochure as amended.
 - Adam Burnett seconded.
 - The brochure was approved by unanimous voice vote.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to make a PDF of the brochure and send to Nick Batchelder at Town Hall for posting on town website and distribution.
- Olin Lathrop said: Richard Hewitt can handle printing up another big batch.
 - Olin Lathrop added as an aside: He'd given a nice big stack of the original 6 brochures to Lisa Murray for the Garden Club Lecture.
 - He will also hand out some at Conservation Summit.
 - Brian Bettencourt added: The Committee will need prints of all 7 brochures – Richard Hewitt can handle.

The eighth order of business was Any Other Business.

- Richard Hewitt was not in attendance; but he'd warned Brian Bettencourt that he'd be late "if at all" coming.
 - He was going to talk about the Community Preservation Commission.
- Olin Lathrop asked: What are we going to be able to do in 10, 20, 50 years for invasive species?
 - He'd just found on the news lately --- RNA Interference for Colorado Potato Beetle.

- The Committee discussed RNA interference as a method of pest control.

Olin Lathrop moved to adjourn the meeting.

Adam Burnett seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM