

# Groton Invasive Species Committee Meeting Minutes

21Sept2020

Via Zoom

Committee Members Present:

Olin Lathrop

Brian Bettencourt

Richard Hewitt

Adam Burnett

Jonathan Basch

Alison Hamilton joined at 7:30 PM

Also attending:

Ron Strohsahl

Agenda:

- 1) Review of minutes from last meeting
- 2) Report on Phragmites treatment and recent results
- 3) Follow-up treatment results - Japanese Knotweed (Nod Rd., Hayden Rd., Shattuck Homestead)
- 4) General Shattuck Homestead update
- 5) Brochure print run
- 6) Vice-chairman position: discussion and mechanism for nomination/selection
- 7) Volunteer group and lecture opportunity with Webelos Scouts

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

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

- The minutes were reviewed live on screen.
- Minor changes were made to the draft minutes.
- Richard Hewitt moved to approve as amended.
  - Olin Lathrop seconded
  - Motion passed by roll call, Adam Burnett abstaining as he wasn't in attendance at that meeting.

The second order of business was a report on Phragmites treatment and recent results.

- Olin Lathrop reported that he hadn't been to Eliades recently, but as of last visit, the treated Phragmites was still dead.
  - Some new plants including cat-tail and loosestrife were creeping in on the edges.
- Brian Bettencourt reported that he'd found a new paper about Phragmites:

- The paper included a review of the development of biocontrols for Phragmites – two stem miner insects.
  - The biocontrols were approved for release in the USA and Canada.
  - They had been released.
- During discussion, Ron Strohsahl reported being interested in joining committee. He is a Wetland scientist from Oxbow Associates.
  - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to send the Phragmites paper to the whole committee.
- The Committee next discussed having Ron Strohsahl's on board:
  - There are no conflicts of interest if/when he ever was representing someone before Conservation Commission for a violation.
  - He could abstain if ever necessary, but highly unlikely.
  - He will take conflict of interest training.
  - Being on one committee or another is not a conflict. It's only a personal conflict that can be an issue.
- The Committee reviewed the history of their Phragmites and Autumn Olive control efforts at Eliades.
  - The timing is key; early-mid September seems most effective.
  - The second treatment was highly effective.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: Back to biocontrol --- how could/would the Committee ever find out if Groton could be a site for biocontrol of Phragmites?
  - After discussion, Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to email and ask Roy Van Driesche (UMass) about Phragmites biocontrol and how a town could get involved.
- Olin Lathrop and Brian Bettencourt reviewed the steps for Ron Strohsahl to get on the Committee.
- Olin Lathrop Moved that Ron Strohsahl be recommended to the Selectmen for membership on the Committee.
  - Jonathan Basch seconded.
  - The Motion passed by unanimous roll call.
  - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to send an email to the Town Manager that the Committee had voted to recommend Ron Strohsahl for membership, and that he'll get his form in soon.
    - This email was sent.

The third order of business was follow-up treatment results on Japanese Knotweed (Nod Rd., Hayden Rd., and Shattuck Homestead).

- Brian Bettencourt said that Olin Lathrop was out in the field spraying Tuesday of last week.
- Olin Lathrop reviewed the background of the control efforts for Ron Strohsahl, including:
  - Nod Rd. treatment plots
  - Hayden Rd. treatment plot.
  - Shattuck Homestead.
- Olin Lathrop reported that he'd sprayed dilute triclopyr (1/4 strength) last Tuesday at the following sites:

- Nod Rd. (again) --- but only the plots where knotweed was short enough to treat. Not the really tall, lush plots.
- Hayden Rd. again.
- Shattuck Homestead again.
- Olin Lathrop said that he was out looking again yesterday; there was no visible change in the knotweed yet. This was to be expected – it takes 2-3 weeks for visible results.

(Alison Hamilton joined the meeting at this point)

- Brian Bettencourt said that he would check the Hayden Rd. knotweed stand in the next week or two.
- Brian Bettencourt added that Japanese Knotweed is satisfying to treat and very visible – it's great for public outreach.
- Jonathan Basch mentioned that he'd found one more knotweed stand near the Groton Country Club --- 20-30 yards wide; not terribly deep, and on Country Club property.
  - Olin Lathrop said that would be a good stand for cut and drip treatment next year.
  - Olin Lathrop added that if the knotweed is near a wetland, the Committee would need to file an RDA with the Conservation Commission.
  - Jonathan Basch said he thought there very well could be a wetland near there. It's on the right, on Lovers Lane, before you get to the parking area.
  - Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to check out the Lovers Lane knotweed and determine its appropriateness for treatment / necessity for RDA. He will also talk to the Country Club if the knotweed is indeed on their land.
- Jonathan Basch asked: Is it worthwhile to put up a sign saying this area was treated by the Committee?
  - Richard Hewitt said: Yes, the sign should list the Committee website, and refer interested people there for more information.
  - Alison Hamilton added: Yes, but not until after the Committee treats the knotweed.

The fourth order of business was a general Shattuck Homestead update.

- Olin Lathrop and Jonathan Basch were there recently.
  - They reviewed recent efforts:
    - The field was mowed in July, then Black Swallowwort was sprayed in August.
    - Spraying throughout the field was conducted by contractors.
    - The contractors noticed lots of swallowwort under a large downed spruce tree -- - this was inaccessible to mowing. The tree came down this past spring.
    - The swallowwort under the tree bore mature seed pods --- this was problematic.
- Olin Lathrop and Jonathan Basch pulled up all the swallowwort they could find under the tree and bagged it all.
  - This yielded two big garbage bags full, mostly bearing seed pods.
  - Brian Bettencourt asked: Were the seed pods still green and not open?

- Olin Lathrop replied: Most, yes. A few were opened.
- Olin Lathrop then reported on the Japanese Knotweed along Martins Pond Rd in that area. This was drip-and-cut treated last spring.
  - He just did a followup treatment of a few straggler plants.
- Brian Bettencourt asked: How popular is that property?
  - Alison Hamilton replied: It is very popular --- lots of dog walkers near the front walk down the trail to the pond and then back. Shattuck is across from (her) house.
  - Brian Bettencourt asked: Given the popularity, would the knotweed by the road be a good site for one of our signs?
  - Olin Lathrop replied: Yes.

The fifth order of business was the recent brochures print run.

- The Committee reviewed and discussed the process and number of brochures.
- Richard Hewitt said: The Commissioners of Trust Funds accepted the Committee's proposal to fund a print run.
  - They made a stipulation: The Committee has to put a statement on the brochures stating "Made possible by a grant from the Town Of Groton's Trust Funds' Lecture Fund".
  - Richard Hewitt Moved to add the statement to the back of the Committee's brochures.
    - Olin Lathrop seconded.
    - During discussion of the motion, Brian Bettencourt said he would put the statement on the back of the brochures, by the copyright notice.
    - The Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
  - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to put the statement on the back of all the brochures, re-generate the PDFs, and send to Richard Hewitt for printing.

The sixth order of business was a vice-chairman position – a discussion and mechanism for nomination and selection

- The Committee held a discussion on the necessity of a Vice-Chairman position.
  - A Vice-chair would be beneficial to help run meetings in instances when the Chairman cannot attend.
- Richard Hewitt Moved to nominate Olin Lathrop for Vice-Chairman.
  - Jonathan Basch seconded.
  - The Motion passed via unanimous roll call.
  - Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to email the Town Clerk and ask him to update the town website with Olin Lathrop's new appointment.

The seventh order of business was a volunteer group and lecture opportunity with the Webelos.

- Brian Bettencourt read an email from Evan Morse, Webelos 2 den leader in W. Groton Pack 12.

- The opportunity Evan Morse described is to meet with the Webelos, tell them about what the Committee does, and then ask them to participate in volunteer work.
  - The Committee discussed this opportunity.
- Richard Hewitt asked: When would this occur?
  - Brian Bettencourt replied: Meet now, then again in spring when more plants are up.
- Alison Hamilton said she was definitely in favor.
- Richard Hewitt added: The Committee could use some of their brochures at this event --- pass them out to the Scouts.
  - Olin Lathrop added that he still has some of the original 6 brochures.
- Brian Bettencourt took an Action Item to:
  - Reach back out to Evan Morse via email;
  - Respond positively;
  - Set up a date in winter to meet the Scouts and discuss Invasive Species and how the Scouts could help.
- The Committee next discussed the types of activities the Scouts could help with in the spring.
  - Olin Lathrop said: Bittersweet
  - Brian Bettencourt said: Garlic Mustard
  - Richard Hewitt said: Turtle sweeps (early July at Shattuck)
  - Brian Bettencourt said: Buckthorn with weed wrenches
    - Ron Strohsahl added that Oxbow Associates has two weed wrenches that they'd probably loan out.

The Committee next discussed the following items:

- On a recent Conservation Commission site walk, Olin Lathrop noticed a small bundle of purple loosestrife in the middle of a small wetland.
- He was wondering how big a plot needed for the biocontrol beetle to be effective...?
  - Brian Bettencourt replied that he was not sure about the dispersal of the beetle; David Black would know - Olin Lathrop should write to him.
- Richard Hewitt added that Rick Muehlke spearheaded that biocontrol effort for the Nashua River Watershed Association.
- Olin Lathrop took an Action Item to write to Bob Pine, David Black, and Rick Muehlke to ask about the suitability of purple loosestrife sites for beetle.
- Adam Burnett discussed Emerald Ash Borer: He was wondering about the Committee's control efforts at Petapawag.
  - Olin Lathrop reported that he was recently there; the treated trees were still alive, albeit with some visible damage.
- Brian Bettencourt reported that he'd recently been to the Forest Bells site and found serious infestation of woolly adelgid in the hemlock trees.

Adam Burnett Moved to adjourn the meeting.

Richard Hewitt seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.