

**GLASTONBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
(INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES AGENCY)
GLASTONBURY COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2019**

The Conservation Commission (Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency), along with Mr. Tom Mocko, Environmental Planner, in attendance held a Special Joint Meeting with the Communication Beautification Committee, along with Greg Foran, Parks Superintendent and Tree Warden, in the Activity Room of the Riverfront Community Center, located at 300 Welles Street, Glastonbury, Connecticut at 7:00 P.M.

1. ROLL CALL

Community Beautification Committee (CBC) members present:

Robert Shipman, Chairman
Della Winans, Vice Chairman
Jarrod Sansoucy, Secretary (left 9:13 PM)
Linda DeGross (left 8:00 PM)
Candice Mark (left 9:00 PM)
Kate Morgan

**Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency
(CC/IWWA) members present:**

Judy Harper, Chairman (*Acting Chair for this meeting*)
Dennis McInerney, Vice-Chairman
Kim McClain, Secretary
Brian Davis (left 9:00 PM)
William Shea
Mark Temple

Members Excused:

Debra DeVries-Dalton (CBC)
Frank Kaputa (CC/IWWA)

2. INTRODUCTION

Chairman Harper called the joint educational meeting between the CC/IWWA and CBC to order at 7:24 P.M. Mr. Foran introduced the speaker, Dr. Randall Probst, Extension Weed Specialist at the University of Massachusetts, to present on invasive plant management.

3. PRESENTATION

Dr. Probst explained the differences between high concerns (native/natural plant community, minimally managed habitats) versus low concerns (intensively managed habitats, such as landscapes and agricultural land) of habitats in the invasive plant issue. He then shared a couple examples of invasive plants that have resulted in real estate issues, with lenders not financing a

property containing the following invasives: Japanese knotweed in the United Kingdom and black swallow wort in the Finger Lakes region of New York.

Dr. Prostak explained that invasive plants are concerning because they reduce biodiversity and cause economic harm (e.g. forestry and sugaring industries), and pose great costs for removal and habitat restoration, as well as threaten native species. He reviewed some of the common traits and characteristics of invasive plants, which include the following: prolific producers of fruit and seed, effective dispersal mechanisms (through birds and wind), effective establishment, quick growth rate, aggressive competitors which often dominate natural vegetation, some species with long growing season. He added that while all invasive plants are weeds, not all weeds are invasive plants. Few natural insect predators and plant diseases are available to control most non-native invasive plants.

Dr. Prostak noted the pitfalls of municipalities in trying to tackle this issue, which include the complete lack of a good control plan; planting desirable plants until the invasive plants are managed; thinking invasive plant problems will fix themselves; and management projects that are too large.

He then explained that in his manual, *Guidance of the Effective Management of Invasive Plants*, which he helped put together with MIPAG (Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group), plans must be long-term, and priorities must be clearly defined and delineated, in order to allocate resources wisely. He listed the steps for developing a successful management project plan as the following:

1. Identify the most significant natural resource values to protect or enhance.
2. Decide which invasive species pose the greatest threat to these natural resources.
3. Know your foe: research what it will take to manage the target species.
4. Develop a realistic management goal.
5. Evaluate your resources relative to the goal.
6. Implement management.
7. Monitor and document outcomes.
8. Reevaluate the project time frame based on experiences (develop and refine best management practices).

Dr. Prostak then highlighted his points by referring to a few examples of controlling certain invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed and common reed (*Phragmites australis*). He explained that, sometimes, expensive herbicides which produce minimal results are not worth the extra cost. In the case of the Japanese Knotweed, for example, one could provide 95% control in the first year using a cheaper, less effective herbicide as opposed to using a more effective, but more expensive herbicide to gain an extra 2% coverage which could cost over five times more.

He also explained that Oriental bittersweet has been a problem around the Connecticut River valley, having driven out most American bittersweet, a native species. He highlighted the importance of tailoring management techniques and approaches to each specific invasive species. For example, to manage oriental bittersweet, foliar spray using triclopyr and glyphosate (which is used to manage Japanese knotweed) does not work. Instead, one must use a cut stem treatment technique and avoid disturbance. Digging or pulling also provide fair control.

Dr. Prostack also discussed the “sterile cultivar” issue, explaining the various ways for a cultivar species can be deemed sterile and what product tracking and labeling concerns that may occur in the nursery industry. He also noted that many species that were once believed to be sterile, such as the callery pears, were actually not so. Dr. Prostack explained that at first the management plan involves a large capital expenditure, then, afterward, there is more maintenance expenditure and reduced capital cost. He asked the audience to think what are the biggest threats to what they are trying to protect; that should then serve to establish their plan.

Commissioner McInerney asked if Dr. Prostack sees many towns that have strategic plans for invasive plants at the local level. Dr. Prostack replied that a lot of the projects in Massachusetts are conducted by regional entities like the Nature Conservancy, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, trustees, reservations, or the National Audubon Society. Aside from that, most of the invasives that are dealt with at the municipal level regard the maintenance of infrastructure within established rights-of-way.

Commissioner Davis noted that effectively controlling invasives is a public relations problem, not a science problem. He lamented the fact that so much money is spent on artificial things based upon what the majority fears, but this issue is not fearful enough to get the attention of the public at large. Dr. Prostack agreed, stating that it is not a science issue but a belief issue. He also noted that, while it is nice that some towns have volunteer groups to address these issues, one cannot always rely on them, unless they have a commitment to deliver.

Chairman Harper asked about the increasing public distrust or fear to use pesticides, noting that many have turned out to be poisonous for humans. Dr. Prostack stated that while those considerations have to be weighed during the construction of treatment solutions, in the U.S., there has been no conclusive proof to link glyphosate (which is used in Roundup) to cancer, and the EPA-equivalent regulatory bodies in Japan, New Zealand, and Australia have also stated that there is no correlation. Dr. Prostack stated that the courts should not be able to decide science. He concluded by explaining that risk = toxicity x exposure. Commissioner McInerney countered that there have been a lot of bad pesticides. Dr. Prostack stated that while some pesticides have subsequently been banned in the United States and Europe, other countries have relied on them immensely, such as southeast Asia using DDT to help combat malaria, even though it is banned in this country.

Dr. Prostack concluded his presentation by stating that, in his guidebook, there is also information on an early detection rapid response. He stressed the perils of myopic zeal, explaining that one should not tackle large, really problematic areas while neglecting those environments in the early stages of trouble; it may likely make more sense to identify and target smaller, less dense areas of non-native invasive plant species in order to have a greater chance of success and to build confidence..

With no further comments or questions, Chairman Harper thanked Dr. Prostack for the enlightening presentation and adjourned the meeting at 9:47 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan, Recording Clerk