

Connecticut Invasive Plants Council
February 14, 2008

Minutes

Present:

Members: Dave Goodwin, Les Mehrhoff, Mary Musgrave, Bill Hyatt (representing Ed Parker), Lou Magnarelli, David Sutherland, Paul Larson, Tom McGowan

Others: Donna Ellis, Nancy Murray, Sarah Kuebbing, Marie Lipsky

Mary Musgrave called the meeting to order at 2:00.

January Minutes: Dave Goodwin moved approval of the January minutes; Paul Larson seconded. They were approved.

DOT Presentation: Ned Herle, DOT's Director of Environmental Planning, had been invited to discuss DOT's practices as they relate to invasive plants, particularly in regards to sand being a vector. He noted that since DOT use of sand has dramatically decreased in the past year due to new road treatment practices, the problem of sand being a spreader of invasive plant seeds should be much less of a problem. He and Kim Lesay from the agency's Landscape Design Office noted, however, that most municipalities have not changed their practices due to the high cost of equipment changes.

The Environmental Planning Office works with the Landscape Design Office on eliminating use of invasives. Lesay noted the difficulty they have in planting on areas that will have very little maintenance and very harsh conditions. There also aren't many contractors who have the equipment DOT requires to implement their landscaping projects. They are short-staffed in their maintenance crews so it can be very challenging to keep them trained, but the crews are generally very interested in helping to control invasives.

The Merrit Parkway has its own standards for what the grass must look like.

Some solely native mixes do not provide adequate coverage or sufficiently quick germination or establishment.

DEP's Erosion and Sediment guidelines still contain recommended seed mixes that contain invasive species.

The EP Office is training staff to be on the lookout for certain invasive plants and to institute control or removal measures. They are requiring contractors in some cases to implement control measures.

Les Merhoff asked if there are any standards concerning the origins of hay bales. Lesay read from the guidelines that do include such standards.

Porcelainberry Update: Musgrave distributed a copy of an item in the Weekly Nursery e-news on a vote by the CNLA to voluntarily phase out sales of porcelainberry.

Attorney General Response: Lou Magnarelli distributed a letter from Attorney General Blumenthal responding to a request from the Connecticut Ag Experiment Station regarding the cultivar issue. Blumenthal stated that the Council should make the determination as to whether cultivars, sterile or otherwise, should be included in bans.

Blumenthal's letter noted that the CAES does not have authority to enforce the invasive plant sale bans. Magnarelli noted that his choices then, if a store refuses to refrain from selling a banned plant, are to call local police or the DEP.

Letter from Governor: Magnarelli distributed a letter from Governor Rell and copies of the relevant statutes, in which she asks boards and commissions to ensure that their members are aware of their duties and responsibilities.

Magnarelli distributed a chart on laws requiring boards and commissions to provide timely notice of meetings and reports on any votes taken.

DEP Position: Paperwork for the DEP position is awaiting approval from various DEP offices. They hope to fill the position by May or June. It is expected, but not confirmed, that the position will be housed in the Wildlife Division.

McGowan asked whether there is any way to ensure that the two-year funding will not lapse since the funding will not start to be spent until the end of the first fiscal year. Hyatt responded that there is no guarantee that the funds will not lapse.

Invasive Plant poster: Murray reported that quotes for printing, rolling (for mailing in tubes) and tubes would be \$4,000 for 2,000 copies, and about \$3,000 for mailing. If an additional 500 were ordered, they would not be mailed but hand delivered. Murray reported that she and Bob Heffernan discussed the idea of including a letter from CNLA, DEP and the Council with the poster. The goal is to have the posters completed by the spring growing/selling season

Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group Annual Symposium: Musgrave distributed a flyer on the fourth CIPWG Symposium to be held at UConn on October 1st. Mehrhoff suggested that the council recommend that \$2,000 from the state appropriation for invasive plants be directed towards helping fund the symposium. Goodwin moved such a motion, Mehrhoff seconded. Hyatt reported that DEP feels that it is important to know more detail about why this funding would be needed this year, and to know if this is just replacing money that could have come from elsewhere. Les noted that the keynote speaker this year will cost much more than previous speakers and he said that he would assemble information about the costs. The council approved the motion

Governor's Proclamation: Ellis displayed a Governor's Proclamation proclaiming February 24 – March 1st as National Invasive Weed Awareness Week in Connecticut and noting the work of the council and four other organizations in educating the public about invasive plants.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50.

The next meeting of the Council will be AT THE DEP OFFICES in Hartford March 11th at 2:00.