

**Invasive Plants Council
Minutes
March 31, 2004**

Present: Dr. Anderson, Mr. Goodwin, Comm. Gresczyk, Mr. Larson, Comm. Leff , Dr. Mehrhoff, Dr. Musgrave, Mr. Sutherland, Mr. McGowan

Absent:

The Meeting was called to order at 1:40 PM by Chairman Leff in Room 1A of the Legislative Office Building.

Dr. Anderson gave a brief synopsis of what happened at the previous meeting. Chairman Leff said that from the minutes it appeared that Dr. Mehrhoff had offered a motion to ban non-controversial plants. Dr. Mehrhoff said yes he had suggested such a motion and industry people asked for time to consider this proposal.

Dr. Anderson expressed concerns that the council would be voting on large groups of plants at a time when the council should be considering them more on an individual basis to see what the impact of each plant is. He understands the time constraint put on the council by the Legislature but he is concerned that there is not an adequate process to judge these plants. Dr. Anderson also asked what the council would do if a plant is banned and then research shows that a certain cultivar is not invasive. Chairman Leff noted that legislation is needed to ban the plants and legislation would be needed to pull cultivars off the list.

Comm. Gresczyk stated that he could not support banning certain plants and therefore was unsure if voting on plants individually would make sense or not.

Mr. Larson pointed out to the council that the council heard testimony at the previous meeting that banning plants would kill the cultivar development process. Banning plants and then finding a cultivar that is not invasive would ruin potential sales for this cultivar. Public education will lag behind in this aspect and the public won't buy the invasive plant.

Mr. Larson made a motion to add an asterisk to the following plant: Frangula Alnus Mill. (Glossy buckthorn). The motion was seconded by Mr. Goodwin and passed on a voice vote. Dr. Mehrhoff noted that while he supported this change he thinks the council should not do this often because the invasive list has been published and distributed and it is not in the council's best interest to have numerous versions of the list in circulation.

Dr. Musgrave asked what the ban would mean and how it would be enforced. Chairman Leff stated that the current language of the bill before the legislature would protect innocent homeowners. Mr. Sutherland stated that a ban will do well to educate people. He agrees that enforcement will be a problem. Comm. Gresczyk stated that it is hard for him to believe that such a ban would have any affect given the ability of birds and the wind to disperse the plants already out there.

Dr. Mehrhoff suggested that the council approach the issue on a category basis and identify just the plants that are economically important. Dr. Anderson agreed with this approach.

Mr. Larson offered a list of plants that he would like to reserve from being recommended to be banned.

Mr. Larson made a motion to recommend all the plants on the invasive list with the exception of:

1. *Acer ginnala*
2. *Acer platinoides*
3. *Robinia psueudoacacia*
4. *Berberis thunbergii*
5. *Euonymus alatus*
6. *Frangula alnus*
7. *Rosa rugosa*
8. *Ligustrum ovalifolium*
9. *Ligustrum vulgare*
10. *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*
11. *Lysimachia nummularia*
12. *Lysimachia vulgaris*
13. *Ornithogalum umbellatum*
14. *Miscanthus sinensis*
15. *Phalaris arundinacea*

The motion included a recommendation to extend the municipal pre-emption by two years. Comm. Gresczyk seconded the motion.

Dr. Mehrhoff asked what plants are the industry giving up in this list that are commercially viable. Mr. Larson says that there are a few with minor impact on the list that the industry has determined are not worth fighting for. Mr. Goodwin suggested that the green industries are taking too much of the blame on this issue. Mr. Sutherland asked what did they think would happen in the next two years to make him feel better about this extension. Mr. Goodwin said that they think it is possible for cultivars to be shown to be non-invasive. Mr. Larson stated that the industry has committed to funding research. Mr. Sutherland noted that the research will not cover all the cultivars, what about the ones that are left?

Mr. Sutherland stated that he could not support the current motion. Mr. McGowan also stated that he couldn't support the motion. He wants to know the economic impact of plants excluded from the ban but not previously outlined by the industry. He is also interested in not acting too hastily. Chairman Leff also asked for numbers from the industry on the impact of the plants not previously stated. Mr. Larson stated that getting these figures would be very hard to do for the next meeting given the time of year and how busy the businesses involved are.

Chairman Leff also asked Mr. Sutherland if it would be possible to get figures from the Nature Conservancy on money they spend every year to eradicate invasives.

Dr. Mehrhoff stated that there are some plants on the list (aquatics) that the council have already recommended banning. Mr. Larson offered an amendment that would exclude the plants that were recommended to be banned previously. Comm. Gresczyk seconded the amendment, which passed on a voice vote.

Dr. Mehrhoff stated that he could support the extension but he cannot support the list part of the motion. Chairman Leff stated that he felt there weren't enough votes to pass this motion and thought the council should wait until next meeting, when there was more information from the industry, to vote on the motion.

Comm. Gresczyk asked for the council to vote on the motion. Mr. Goodwin concurred. Comm. Gresczyk called the question. The motion to call the question failed. There was discussion about whether members were feeling pressure to vote on something before the end of the legislative session. Mr. Sutherland moved to table the original motion. Comm. Gresczyk again stressed that the council should vote on the motion. Mr. Sutherland thought that the current motion would not satisfy the legislature. There was a vote to table, the motion was tabled on a 5-4 roll call vote.

There was a motion by Mr. Sutherland to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGowan. The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emanuel Merisotis
Clerk- Environment Committee