

Draft Minutes

Invasive Plants Council
Tuesday October 7, 2008
2PM, Valley Laboratory
Windsor, CT

Members present: Dave Goodwin, Phil Prelli, Les Mehrhoff, Mary Musgrave, David Sutherland, Bill Hyatt, Tom McGowan, Paul Larson

Others present: Donna Ellis, Collin Ahrens, Nancy Murray

The meeting was called to order by Musgrave at 2:10 pm.

The minutes for the 9/9/08 Council Meeting were distributed and reviewed. Following incorporation of minor edits, approval of the minutes was moved by Goodwin and seconded by Sutherland. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Musgrave introduced the guest speaker, Collin Ahrens, a doctoral candidate at UConn. Mr. Ahrens spoke to the group for 20 minutes about herbicide resistant creeping bentgrasses and the potential for future invasive plant problems. The talk stimulated many questions and discussion about this complex issue.

Musgrave distributed draft language on procedures for the Council to use in the event of the need for an email ballot. Discussion centered on safeguards to ensure the transparency and timeliness of the process. Prelli proposed adding an additional step to the process, in which the results of the ballot and discussion of the issue would take place at the subsequent Council meeting. With this amendment, the procedure was moved for adoption by Prelli and seconded by Hyatt. The motion passed unanimously. The procedure is attached to these minutes.

Hyatt updated the group on the DEP Invasive Plants Coordinator Position. DEP is executing a cooperative project agreement with UConn Department of Plant Science through June 30, 2009 for implementing the position on a temporary basis. The scope of work and deliverables were read to the group and discussed. The Aquatic Nuisance Species position at DEP remains on hold despite the majority of its funding coming from federal rather than state sources. Hyatt explained that about 40 positions that were already in the pipeline at the time of the hiring freeze had to be resolved before this position can be considered, so the timeframe for filling the position is undetermined.

Hyatt updated the group on the Grants to Municipalities RFP. The RFP is expected to be issued October 17, 2008 with about 1 month available for response. Municipalities will be invited to propose expenditures for eradication and control of invasive plants (terrestrial and/or aquatic) in public use areas. Several council members expressed concern that the proposals had to come from municipalities (not including non-profits, land trusts, etc.), but Prelli said that this had worked well with several Dept. of Ag grants

because the non-profits then just associated themselves with towns. The DEP expects to award \$175K in response to these proposals. The funding must be committed to the projects by June 30, 2009.

Ellis gave a report on the CT Invasive Plant Working Group's 2008 symposium, which had been held at UConn on October 1. Over 400 people attended and the talks were excellent. McGowan asked what the attendance numbers meant for our Council. The group discussed the growing demand for information about control of invasive plants, and the expansion of groups involved with solving these problems. Ellis recognized the financial support for the symposium from DEP's invasive plants funding.

Musgrave discussed a potential highway demonstration project, perhaps using knotweed. Murray suggested that the issue be tabled until someone from the highway department can attend the meeting. The issue was tabled.

The group discussed what the Council's recommendations should be for the upcoming legislative session. Hyatt noted that the funding for the invasive plants program is in the preliminary budget, and Prelli suggested that the main role of the Council should be stressing the need to get the technical language changes passed this year. He suggested that one-on-one meetings with the legislators who have a problem with the language would be the most productive approach. Musgrave pointed out that the next meeting would be the last opportunity to get material into this year's annual report, since the report has to be turned in in December. She asked Hyatt to report at the next meeting on the accomplishments made with the invasive plant funding so that this could be reflected in the Council's report.

Other old or new business. Goodwin said that the Newtown Garden Club is asking the Council to reconsider the status of coltsfoot and one other medicinal plant. He is getting them to prepare a letter to the Council with the details so that it can be considered.

Next meeting is scheduled for (Thursday) November 6, 2008, 2PM, at the Valley Lab in Windsor. Mark Brand (UConn) will give an update on differential invasiveness of cultivars and development of sterile cultivars. Mehrhoff and Sutherland noted that they would not be able to attend the November 6 meeting and asked that Mark Brand's presentation on UConn's barberry and euonymus research be rescheduled. Musgrave agreed to ask Dr. Brand if he could accommodate this request.

Adjournment was moved by Sutherland; Goodwin seconded. Following unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 3:54 pm.