

Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Friday, January 22, 2021

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present: Cathy Armstrong, Barb Gunn, Cherie Miltimore, Marg Palmer, Jacqui Paulson

Regrets: Pam Madoff

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of November 20, 2020 was motioned by Cathy, seconded by Barb and carried by all present.

2. Agenda

Jacqui's Report (Abkhazi Garden Head Gardener)

Cherie's Report (Abkhazi Garden Site Manager)

Barb's Report (Owner/Operator of Teahouse at Abkhazi Garden)

Marg's Report (Member of Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society)

Cathy's Report (TLC Executive Director)

3. Jacqui's Report (Abkhazi Garden Head Gardener)

Fallen Tree in Garden – a big branch broke off Garry Oak landing across the driveway, bringing down wires, lightly damaging the fence and narrowly missing our Rhododendrons. Bartlett Trees chopped up the wood to clear driveway. Bartlett suggests cabling the remaining branch to another tree, chopping the trunk to 12 feet or removing the tree. Willem Cleef of the City of Victoria will let us know what we are allowed to do under city guidelines for Garry Oaks.

Clean Out of Tool Shed – Jacqui has cleaned out the tool shed and is taking junk away.

New Green Equipment – with monies from Friends of Abkhazi Garden, Jacqui has purchased some battery operated equipment: lawnmower, two hedgers, leaf blower and an edger. The gas powered tools will be sold. The Lawnmower has already been sold.

Boulevard Garden – plants have been purchased for this garden to be planted soon.

Herb Garden – Jacqui has a design for the herb garden and she will be propagating seeds and plans to sell 6pk herbs and edible flowers (above what the Teahouse will need) at the plant stands. Herbs will include thyme, chives, marjoram and oregano. New lavender will be planted in the herb garden to replace older woody lavender plants.

Georgia Garden – still in the process of planning. Would like to add pergolas and trellising for grape vines. Need to decide on fencing. (we have quote for replacing fencing in the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP). Still researching art design of Georgian mountains and sea.

Volunteer Break – garden volunteers were asked to take a break in January during the cold and slow growth season so Jacqui could catch up on her work. Chipper volunteers came in to work on the big pile of leaves left from the Fall. Jacqui is missing the volunteers and looks forward to having the gardeners back in February.

Horticultural Students – students from HCP will be coming in two times in the next couple of months to do pruning. There will be about 15 students with two teachers supervising.

4. Cherie's Report (Abkhazi Garden Site Manager)

Abkhazi Garden Store – Holiday decorations were sold starting Nov 21 to Dec 24. Volunteers came on the weekends to sell wreaths, swags, festive planters, table toppers and seeds which brought in over \$1700.

TLC Abkhazi Garden T-shirts – Some of the Irish Green T-shirts arrived before Christmas and we invited volunteers to come on December 24th to pick them up along with a chocolate treat. Jacqui received 4 T-shirts with Head Gardener written on the back.

Restoring Floor and Painting of Teahouse – Barb closed the Teahouse from Jan 3 – Jan 19. The garden also closed for this period of time. We restored and refinished all the wood floors in the Teahouse and painted the doorways and ceilings and washrooms. We rented a container from Mobox to store all the Teahouse furniture as all the rooms needed to be emptied for the work to be done.

Nicolas' Hanging Rugs - there are two rugs hanging in the Teahouse that need to be cleaned in the near future. Cherie will find out who cleans antique rugs and find out the history of these rugs.

Gardener's Plaque – Cherie has checked in with all the TLC Head Gardeners about doing a historical plaque of head gardeners that would be mounted on the Toolshed. Cherie is investigating plaques for this project. Barb mentioned that donors may want recognition in the garden as well.

Oak Tree Down – When Cherie saw the fallen tree and downed wires, she called the Fire Department and BC Hydro. The Fire Truck came right away. The Fire Chief was concerned that the wires could snap and reported this to BC Hydro. Seven calls and two days later, BC Hydro had the power back on. Cherie also called Shaw and Telus regarding downed cables. The thicker black wire belongs to Shaw and the other 3 wires belong to Telus. Jim repaired the fence and checked out the area around the support mast on the roof of the Teahouse that now leans. He tarred up any gaps so water will not leak into the house and is looking for a more permanent fix.

Cougar Driftwood Sculpture – Tanya Bub has finished creating a driftwood cougar to display in the garden. She will donate half of the monies of the sale of this art to TLC. Jacqui will see that it gets seven coats of varnish before we display it in the garden. Please note that Tanya created Takaya the Wolf that owner, Cheryl Alexander would like to display in the garden in the Fall and that Tanya has been commissioned to create sculptures for the Malahat Sky Walk.

Publicity 2021 – Here are some ideas for 2021 – Open House (delayed due to pandemic as attracts a crowd), arrival of driftwood Cougar sculpture, grand opening of Boulevard Garden, Georgian Garden diplomatic event with Georgian Ambassador and Lieutenant Governor (Cherie will find out about display of cocktail dresses at Government House museum) and unveiling of Head Gardener's Plaque with past head gardeners in attendance.

Abkhazi Garden Welcome Guide – will update so it includes new gardens – Boulevard, Georgian, herb and it includes Abkhazi's memorial location and

Abkhazi Garden Keys – Cherie sorted out who has keys and which keys still worked. There are 12 different keys used at the garden and the TLC Head Office has a set of these 12 keys.

Maintenance – there is now a Abkhazi Garden Maintenance Log book in the volunteer cupboard at the Teahouse. Anyone who comes on site to check out a problem or fix something must sign in. This info will be added to an ongoing excel sheet with cost as applicable. Cherie will do a maintenance check of Abkhazi Garden with Jim in the next month. These are to be done twice a year.

5. Barb's Report (Owner/operator of The Teahouse at Abkhazi Garden)

Thank You – Barb is pleased with the new floors and painting of the teahouse that took place while the Teahouse was closed for two weeks. She thanked Cherie for organizing this work and for getting the power and internet service back on at the Teahouse after the tree fell.

Valentine's Menu – the Teahouse will be serving Chocolate Lover's Tea from Feb 3 – Feb 28.

6. Marg's Report (Member of Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society)

Friend's Next Meeting – Friends will be having a zoom meeting of their board next week to discuss future plans.

Green Power Tools – Friends spent \$3000 dollars on battery operated tools for the garden. These items included a lawnmower, two hedgers (one with a longer handle) an edger and a leaf blower.

New Members – people keep signing up to be members of Friends even in COVID times.

7. Cathy's Report (TLC Executive Director)

Team Effort - Cathy is pleased with the team effort demonstrated at the garden.

TLC Success – TLC is experiencing a lot of support during the pandemic. In their campaign for the Millstream Creek Watershed, their goal of \$75,000 was overshoot as they reached over \$200,000.

New Office – TLC likes their new office but with the pandemic, some staff are working from home. Cathy looks forward to hosting social events again.

Thank You to Volunteers – Cathy appreciates all the work the volunteers have done during the pandemic. They have pulled us through these challenging times.

Adjournment at 11:55am

Next Meeting: will be Friday, Feb 19 at 11am by zoom.