



Annual General Meeting

1 P.M. Saturday, September 25, 2021

Draft Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order 1:05 p.m.

Present were board members Frances Sloan Sainas, Mel Lehan, Tom Watson, Kelly Fretwell, Paleah Black Moher, Marika Smith, Sara Wickham, Lori Roter, Jeff Sheldrake, and Andrew Stewart. Staff included Connie Pedersen, Lisa Cross, Cathy Armstrong, Dianna Stenberg, Sherry Beauvais, Larissa Bron, and Karen Iwachow. Members in attendance included Colin Gabelmann, Nancy Kenyon, Robert McMinn, and Vicky Husband. Guests included Larry Beatty of Grant Thornton.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the Agenda. Moved by Mel Lehan. Seconded by Lori Roter. Passed.

3. Welcome, Indigenous Acknowledgement, and Overview of Process from Frances Sloan Sainas

4. Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting

Motion to approve the AGM minutes of October 17, 2020. Moved by Tom Watson. Seconded by Marika Smith. Passed.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

6. Report from the Chair, Frances Sloan Sainas

The 2020/2021 fiscal year saw the organization grow by two very important acquisitions. In the fall of 2020 TLC completed a very successful fundraising effort to protect a portion of the Millstream Creek Watershed in the District of Highlands. We not only protected this site but also established an endowment of over 68 thousand dollars for longterm stewardship of this site. Then in the spring of 2021, TLC acquired SISŁENEM or (HALIBUT ISLAND) in a unique and perhaps president setting agreement with the WSANEC Leadership Council. The success of our acquisitions and our programming could not be possible without our great many partners in conservation.

First of all, our generous TLC members and donors, who take action to protect the at-risk areas of concern throughout our province. This spring multiple donors came forward to offer matching opportunities to support covenant and restoration work on SISŁENEM and inspired supporters to contribute a combined \$100,000 toward the island. This kind of generosity – and the thoughtfulness to offer to match gifts – continues to inspire us.

Local Indigenous communities including the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council who are joining us in protection and ongoing stewardship of culturally and ecologically sensitive lands.

Volunteers who donate hours of their lives to this important cause including our board, administrative support, and site specific enthusiasts. The devoted garden volunteers of Abhkazi Gardens worked throughout the pandemic to keep this “Jewel in our Crown” vibrant.

Other land trusts and like-minded conservation organizations like the Peninsula Streams Society who partnered with us in the Millstream project.

And all levels of government from local, provincial, and federal. This fiscal, in addition to the supports we qualified for in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, TLC was the recipient of a \$248,000 grant from the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada’s Nature Fund, that enabled us to acquire the Millstream Creek Watershed property.

Thank you all for your support during this year. We know it has been tough, but you continue to inspire us to keep working on protecting our province’s biodiversity. Thank you.

7. Report from the Executive Director, Cathy Armstrong

I for one did not expect that we would be back on Zoom again, I was so looking forward to seeing you all in person. Our Board and staff had scheduled an Indigenous Perspectives all day workshop for tomorrow which has been postponed. We are all weary of our virtual existence!

Today we report on a year like no other. A year of uncertainty. A year of disruption. But despite the challenges, a most rewarding year, as our seasoned Board member Mel Lehan remarked “in all the years I have been involved, this is a year filled with memorable achievements”.

I will take the liberty to describe what I believe were memorable achievements:

TLC supporters stepped up and protected 27 acres of Coastal Douglas Fir and potential salmon spawning habitat in the Highlands on Millstream Creek. Peninsula Streams and Goldstream Hatchery stepped up and coordinated the release of 2,500 coho fry into the waters of Mary Lake, a spectacular day of excitement as we joined the bucket brigade. The return of salmon to Millstream Creek would be a profound legacy, a cause of celebration. We give thanks to the Greater Victoria Greenbelt Society for protecting the adjoining Mary Lake lands, in partnership with the Tsartlip nation.

Dr Tara Martin, and Linda and David Cornfield stepped up last Fall and created an opportunity for TLC to purchase SISCENEM Island in the Salish Sea. The couple provided the acquisition funds, and TLC supporters rallied to provide funds for restoration and covenant creation. And together we were able to extend a hand of friendship to the WSANEC Leadership Council as we work towards transferring title. Chief Don Tom shared that this was the first time their Nation had been approached in such a way, that gaining land for their cultural

and educational needs had to this point always required much effort. Chief Tom called this “a true act of reconciliation”. What higher praise is there than that?

This year TLC staff stepped up. I am so proud of them! We adapted to working at home. We shut down our Gonzales office. We met virtually and everyone adapted their work routines to accommodate the new reality. Dianna managed the technical aspects, keeping us connected and moving our server offsite. Connie learned a tsunami of new government programs, wage subsidies, rent subsidies both as landlord and as tenants, that continuously changed, honestly it would make your head spin. We are thankful for the government support and you will see in the financial statements and hear from our Treasurer how substantial it was.

Lisa drove to pick up mail, drove to deliver cheques to Connie, and worked hard to pivot our Passport to Nature events. Her work supporting our members and donors continued without abatement, and we are grateful for that, as it buoyed all of our spirits. Strangely, Lisa decided to move during this time, just for good measure. Buying and selling and moving in a pandemic is certainly a challenge! Our accounting coordinator Sherry moved as well, but through all of this she kept our auditors supplied with everything they needed to get our financial statements completed.

Torrey worked right up to and including her day of delivery to a beautiful baby girl! Congratulations Torrey! Karen also chose to move, buying her first home. What is it about pandemics and moving?? Can someone please explain? Karen shouldered more responsibility as Torrey took leave, and has been supporting our new hire, Larissa, to get acquainted with all things TLC. Larissa is a Deertrails graduate, and you may have seen her video about that experience that was shared at our AGM two years ago.

2 years!! It has been two years since our inaugural Deertrails naturalist education program that took place in Clearwater. We had to cancel our Deertrails Naturalist Education programs set up for Clearwater and Cortes Island for a second time this year. This program was our beacon of hope in the fight against climate change, and putting it on pause was hard to accept. We hope we can resume next May.

Karen and Torrey were the most impacted, as their work has a large component of field work, almost all of which had to be cancelled. What this allowed, however, was increased planning and organizing time.

Together they worked on a new strategic plan for the covenant program and worked with our Quote “Summer Student” Paul, (who actually joined us in January), to digitize all of the materials stored in binders. What a mountain of work that was!

For myself, two acquisitions kept me hopping, as well as a search for new office premises. I will never forget the electricity in the office as we closed the deal on SISCENEM, with an un-named staff person exclaiming “We bought a fricking island!” I can only say that hard work brings good luck, and TLC is very lucky to have supporters who step up. Both of our campaigns, for Millstream Creek Watershed, and for SISCENEM

surpassed goals, and have allowed us to create substantial endowments to ensure their protection forever.

Thank you!

Never a dull moment for sure. We also worked on a reserve fund policy, which the board approved last April. A true red-letter day for TLC I believe. As we stand here today we have six months of operating funds set aside to ensure the long term financial stability of TLC.

These achievements are a reflection of the commitment the Board has made, to stick it out, to do the work, and thus to allow TLC to return to the good work this organization has always stood for. I am very proud of all we have achieved. Thank you again for standing beside us on this remarkable journey.

Mel Lehan commented that he was thrilled that TLC was able to purchase the Island and that it will be turned over to a First Nation. Proud of our organization and hopes it becomes precedent.

8. Treasurer's Report from Lori Roter

Along with many other non-profits, TLC was impacted by the pandemic. We were able to receive support from federal funding. In the uncertainty of the first year of the pandemic we could not predict what would happen. Thankfully, we didn't experience a cash flow issue.

The knowledge and experience of the board lead to a reserve fund to prepare for potential uncertainty in the future. Policy was drafted and implemented which includes guidelines for the use and repayment of funds.

TLC has not established a covenant defense fund but hope to in the next year.

The near future will also include the revision of policies for changes in the landscape over the last couple of years.

Quarterly board financial reporting includes contrasting fixed costs with known revenues in order to help the board shift discretionary spending when necessary.

Thank you to our members and donors for your ongoing support.

9. Presentation of Financial Statements by Larry Beatty of Grant Thornton

The Independent Auditor's Report is the end product of the audit which is accomplished with Grant Thornton and TLC staff in accordance with standards for non-profits. This year the audit was completed 100% remotely.

The statement of operations on Page 3 shows an increase in revenues from the previous fiscal year. Donations increased with the majority for the purchase of Halibut Island. Donations in kind include stock donations.

These figures are also reflected in the increase in capital asset values. Total expenses included donations of \$186,000 which were contributions to endowment funds. Salaries are also a high percentage of the expenses.

Mostly consistent with previous year.

Page 4 of the audited financial statements, the statement of changes in fund balances, reconciles opening fund balances. Of notes are the interfund transfer of \$530,232 which includes the \$400,000 operational reserve and

reflects the decisions and policy of the society.

Page 5 is essentially a balance sheet and breaks down assets and liabilities. This includes properties acquired as a capital asset increase. The fund balances also include the internally restricted operational reserve. The externally restricted reflect the specific purposes set by the donors. Unrestricted funds have no restrictions moving forward.

Provided opportunity for any questions.

10. Appointment of Auditor

Motion to appoint Grant Thornton as auditor for TLC's 2021/22 fiscal period. Moved by Lori Roter.

Seconded by Tom Watson. Passed.

11. Nomination of Mel Lehan, Lori Roter, and Fran Sloan Sainas

Board Chair Frances Sloan Sainas thanked retiring board member Marika Smith for her contributions to TLC including the human resources manual.

Motion to ratify the election of Mel Lehan, Lori Roter, and Fran Sloan Sainas to TLC's Board of Directors for three-year terms. Moved by Tom Watson. Seconded by Andrew Steward. Passed.

12. Election of Kelly Fretwell and Paleah Black Moher

Motion to elect Kelly Fretwell and Paleah Black Moher to TLC's Board of Directors for three year terms.

Moved by Jeff Sheldrake. Seconded by Sara Wickham. Passed.

13. New/Other Business

Tom Watson requested that Cathy Armstrong speak to recent covenant defense in Port Coquitlam. Cathy shared the defense, not within the 2020-2021 fiscal year, was regarding the Vida Covenant. The protected 2-acre covenant was registered 15 years ago. The property remains wild and owned by an elderly gentleman. Parties including an heir wanted to remove the covenant. TLC's Board of Directors responded no and that the property remains ecologically important. The Justice of the Supreme Court of B.C. supported TLC and awarded the organization costs. This is precedent setting. Staff have been asked to speak on this by LTABC at the next conference.

14. Adjourn 1:58 p.m.