

Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Friday, February 19, 2021

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present: Cathy Armstrong, Barb Gunn, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson, Lesley Wood

Regrets: None

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of January 22, 2021 was motioned by Cathy, seconded by Cherie and carried by all present.

2. Agenda

Cathy's Report (TLC Executive Director)

Jacqui's Report (Abkhazi Garden Head Gardener)

Cherie's Report (Abkhazi Garden Site Manager)

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

Lesley's Report (President of Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society)

3. Cathy's Report (TLC Executive Director)

Georgian Garden Ambassador - Cathy reached out to the ambassador to share plans for the Georgian Garden. The ambassador likes our plans and likes the idea of grape vines growing in the garden. He wants us to develop the garden as we wish.

Georgian Garden Artwork – Cathy recommends going with a company who can do the design in corton steel. Suggestions were made to improve the design such as distinguishing the mountains from the sea.

Georgian Garden Fencing – Fencing by kiosk is recommended by Georgian garden so it is strong and Jacqui can attach plants or artwork to it. Pam recommended we have a consistent fence around the garden. Cherie will contact Sam at Tower Fence Products for a quote on areas that need new fencing.

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

Fallen Tree in Garden – Due to some rot, the city inspector Willem Cleef has asked us to remove the remaining branch and replace this tree with two new trees. Jacqui has given the city a \$700 deposit for each new tree. There will be an Arbutus and Garry Oak planted. Bartlett Trees will come and cut the remaining branch down to a tall stump on Monday Feb 22nd. Jacqui is sourcing the two new trees which can be difficult to find.

Pacific Horticultural Students – 15 students and 2 instructors came to Abkhazi garden on Thursday, February 18th to prune in the garden. Jacqui is arranging for a second visit.

Propagation – propagation is going well. Jacqui will have plants for sale on the plant stands when we open on Saturday, March 20th.

Spraying of Trees – Jacqui would like to spray the Garry Oaks (caterpillars) and Cherry Trees (borers). Sent in a quote for approval.

Facebook Page – Instagram is no longer connected to the Abkhazi Facebook Page. Will consult with Dianna to fix problem and make an Abkhazi Garden Facebook Page accessible by Jacqui and Cherie.

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

Snow Storm – Cleared boulevard sidewalk on Saturday, Feb 13 and helped Josh clear pathway to Teahouse on Sunday, Feb 14th.

Garden Re-opening – Volunteers will be coming back to gate greet and docent starting March 20th. Plants sales will start then as well. No formal Open House due to the pandemic.

Nicolas' Hanging Rugs - Dusty of Luv-A-Rug believes the rugs were made in Turkey, are made of cotton and are not antiques. Luv-A-Rug will clean the two rugs for \$223.90 and donate this cost back to TLC.

The **Greater Victoria Flower Count** will do its media launch from Abkhazi Garden this year on Monday, March 1st. It will be their 46th year and the first year at Abkhazi. Many thanks to Barb for her help in making this happen.

The **Mountain Lion** driftwood sculpture created by Tanya Bub has been varnished by Jacqui and we will try to get media coverage of this driftwood sculpture as we place it in the garden. It is selling for \$3000, and half of this sale will be donated to the TLC.

Tess Van Straaten of CHEK TV is writing an article about Abkhazi Garden in Tweed Magazine. She would be delighted to cut the ribbon when we open the Boulevard Garden and she hopes to do weather from Abkhazi Garden this year.

The **Victoria Horticultural Society** is celebrating 100 years and is doing a story on Abkhazi Garden for their online magazine, the Gardenry. Barbara Abercrombie, member of the editorial team came to the garden and took a picture of Jacqui and Cherie for this article.

Costume Museum at Government House – Peggy’s cocktail dresses and possibly a Georgian uniform are to be showcased at the costume museum this year. Government House is undergoing renovations until September of this year and the Teahouse is closed. 2022 may be a better year for publicity. Cherie will follow up with Mary Anne Skill of the Costume Museum.

Christopher Ball – Cherie will contact Chris regarding Nico’s slides. Would like to have pictures for the Costume Museum, of Nico’s tower and the development of the garden.

Special Guest –Valerie Murray, head gardener at Abkhazi Garden from 2001-2009 and volunteer before that, came for a visit this month to share her knowledge of Abkhazi Garden.

Artifact – Barb found a booklet of WW 1 letters written by relatives of Peggy. Cherie will take this to the TLC Head Office so it can be recorded as an artifact.

Maintenance – Cherie has booked Jim Sharp for an Annual Maintenance check of the garden in March. We are changing out the old rusty outdoor lights for new ones with LED lights.

6. Barb’s Report (Owner/operator of The Teahouse at Abkhazi Garden)

Special High Teas – The Chocolate Lover’s Tea is very popular. Unfortunately the Teahouse had to cancel bookings for Saturday Feb 13 due to the snow fall. In March, the Teahouse will be serving the Mad Hatter’s Tea.

A Curious Cage - is going to be printed again by Sono Nis Press.

7. Lesley's Report (President of Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society)

Disbanding Friends – Since its formation in 2014, the Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society has been helping to fund Garden-related projects, while keeping a watchful eye on this unique urban oasis. With the TLC now doing the plant sales and with no one wanting to serve on the Friend's board, Friends has decided to disband. Out of 54 votes, 38 people were in favour of disbanding and 0 were opposed.

Friends will continue on as an informal group to discuss the garden and there will be a representative on the Abkhazi Advisory Board. There will be about \$6000 in funds that will be used to benefit the living garden.

In the last few years, Friends has made significant equipment purchases for the Garden, including a new chipper, battery operated equipment, a replacement pump for one of the ponds, wheelbarrows, hand tools and plants.

Cathy expressed her deep appreciation to the group. Friends formed at a fragile time in the garden's history and helped manage the garden through tricky times.

Abkhazi Garden Spring Video – this video needs some updating such as the correct name of the Spanish fir and the map of Georgia. Cathy would like to bring this up at the next meeting.

Adjournment - Pam moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:18pm. Seconded by Jacqui.

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