

**Meeting:** Abkhazi Advisory Board

**Date:** Friday, March 26, 2021

**Time:** 11am

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

## **Minutes**

**Present:** Barb Gunn, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson, Sue Hara

**Regrets:** Cathy Armstrong

### **1. Adoption of Minutes**

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of February 19, 2021 was motioned by Pam, seconded by Jacqui and carried by all present.

### **2. Agenda**

**Sue's Report** (Friends of Abkhazi Garden)

**Jacqui's Report** (Abkhazi Garden Head Gardener)

**Cherie's Report** (Abkhazi Garden Site Manager)

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

### **3. Sue's Report** (Friends of Abkhazi Garden)

**Disbanding Friends** – The Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society has been dissolved with the BC Registry of Societies. \$6000 has been handed over to TLC. The Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society records will also be handed over to TLC. The website has been shut down.

**What is Next for Friends?** – an informal group of Friends is determining their next steps. Members of the board hope that Friends will continue on as a group without the requirement of the society act if that suits them. We also hope that they will continue to contribute their expertise and leadership on the Abkhazi Advisory Board.

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

**Two New Garry Oaks Approved** – City inspector came to inspect two new Garry Oaks that are now planted in the garden to replace the fallen Garry Oak. The inspector was pleased with the size and quality of the trees. The TLC can now get the \$700 per tree deposit back from the city.

**Irrigation** – the irrigation has been turned back on. Jacqui needs the water on for the plants at the greenhouse. She will ask our irrigation company to come and double check the heads on the sprinklers that service the Boulevard Garden as she does not want water to be spraying on the sidewalk.

**Pacific Horticultural Students** – Jacqui is hoping that the students from HCP will be back for pruning soon but there may be a \$400 fee for this service. Barb is willing to pay \$200 of the fee to help with the costs. TLC would need to pick up the difference. Jacqui will talk with HCP to confirm if there is a fee and talk to Cathy as needed.

**Georgian Garden Artwork** – Jacqui is consulting with Bronte of Freeman Fabrication who did the memorial rocks for the Abkhazis and Metal Mermaid from Saltspring.

**Database Upgrades** – Jacqui is making a list of when the rhodos are blooming. The excel database of plants is outdated. Jacqui would like to update with pictures. She plans to map out the plants in their proper beds. It would be helpful to have a volunteer take pictures of each flower bed each month through the year.

**Hornbeam Pruning by Neighbours** – Jacqui was taken by surprise when the neighbours booked Barlett Trees to prune the hornbeams without communicating with her. There is an agreement that the neighbours pay for the pruning every two years. Jacqui would like to be consulted about when the pruning will take place.

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

**Fencing** – Cherie researched the cost of fencing for the Georgian section and the whole garden to make the fencing consistent around the garden. Right now we have 7+ different types – some sections are in a dreadful state especially seen from the neighbour's side. To finish the east fence with the new fence by the front gate could cost \$24,000 to \$31,000 (GST included for both quotes). Tower Fencing says it is a lot cheaper to do everything at once and quoted \$47,940.00 plus GST. Cherie is talking to neighbours to see if they will pay half of the costs of the fence between their property and Abkhazi Garden, applying for a federal grant and talking to Rotary.

If we cannot get the fence up by the Georgian Garden in a timely manner, Jacqui will find an alternative way to design the garden until the fence is installed.

**Painting the Exterior of the Buildings** – we are applying for a grant from the Victoria Heritage Foundation. Simone Vogel Horridge, principal conservator, is determining our heritage colours. We need to apply for a painting change with the city and send an application with quotes to the VHF. Pam volunteered to help with this grant.

**Garden Re-opening** – Volunteers came back to gate greet and docent on March 20<sup>th</sup>. In the first 30 minutes, \$50 in donations came in on the card. There were over \$220 dollars in plants sold on the first weekend. We are off to a good start.

**Heritage BC Award** – Cherie nominated the Abkhazi Garden Volunteer team for a Heritage BC award. Our team will receive an Outstanding award in the Distinguished Service category. There are 3 levels of recognition for this award. Outstanding for excellence, honour for high achievement and recognition for noteworthy achievements. Heritage BC will announce the award at the end of this month.

**Greater Victoria Flower Count** - media launch took place at Abkhazi Garden on Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. It was their 46<sup>th</sup> year and the first year at Abkhazi. Media coverage from CHEK News, CTV and the Black Press. We counted over 3 million blooms at Abkhazi Garden this year.

**Dead deer** – visitors smelled a rotting deer on the other side of the fence up from the Summerhouse and told Barb. Cherie contacted the appropriate neighbour and it has been removed.

**Victoria Horticultural Society** – a story on Abkhazi Garden is in the March issue of the Gardenry which is posted online for members only.

**Costume Museum at Government House** – Peggy's cocktail dresses and possibly a Georgian uniform will be showcased at the costume museum this year starting May 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Christopher Ball** – Cherie tried contacting Chris regarding Nico's slides and other things such as Nico's tower but he is not returning calls.

**Maintenance** – Cherie and Jim Sharp did an Annual Maintenance check of the garden in March. A report should be ready by next AAB meeting. Jim is stepping down from any heavy maintenance work.

**Message Board** – A message board is being installed by the front gate on the righthand side. Now visitors can find out about the wonderful things that go on inside the garden.

**New AAB board member** – Samantha Beare will return to the board after taking some time off. She has gate greeted in the past but this year she will act as a docent in the garden.

**Facebook Page** – Dianna will set up a Facebook Page for Abkhazi Garden when she gets back from holidays in April.

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

**Open Seven Days a Week** – The teahouse will be open 7 days a week from April 1 to September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Mother's Day Tea** – will be on the Saturday May 8 and Sunday May 9 this year. Barb offered to give Jacqui some teacups for the plant sale.

**Spring Break** – the teahouse was busy on Spring break. There were lots of families coming for tea especially grandmas with their grandkids.

**Adjournment** - Jacqui moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:50 am. Seconded by Cherie.

**Next Meeting:** will be Friday, Apr 16 at 11am by zoom.