

Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Friday, April 16, 2021

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present: Barb Gunn, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson, Marg Palmer

Regrets: Cathy Armstrong, Samantha Beare

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of March 26, 2021 was motioned by Pam, seconded by Barb and carried by all present.

2. Agenda

Jacqui's Report (Abkhazi Garden Head Gardener)

Marg's Report (Informal Friends Group)

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

Cherie's Report (Abkhazi Garden Site Manager)

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

Herb Garden – Jacqui is getting the herb garden pulled together. She is propagating herbs in the greenhouse that will be planted in the herb garden.

New Greenhouse – Hopes to purchase an new older model greenhouse from Russell Nursery for a good price. Will be rearranging the service area to accommodate the new greenhouse and a storage area for the Teahouse.

Plant Sales – Jacqui is busy getting plants ready for sale on 2 plant stands at our front gate.

Irrigation – Our irrigation company came in to check the lines and discovered a pipe was broken. Jacqui will get that repaired.

Decrocusing – The crocuses were so colourful for the Flower Count. Now Jacqui has the volunteer gardeners digging out the grass leaves of the crocus plant that are left behind and look messy in the garden.

To Be Continued – Jacqui's connection to zoom was cut off. She will have a more fulsome report at the next meeting.

4. Marg's Report (Informal Friends Group)

Easter Monday - Google and TLC Website showed that we were closed Easter Monday so fewer visitors came. Cherie will contact Dianna who has been on holidays to update the website and Google.

Risk Management at Closing – there is a gap of time when staff and volunteers have left the garden and when Paladin arrives to sweep the grounds of visitors and lock up. Cherie will work with Barb, TLC and Paladin to make sure the garden is not left unattended.

Neighbour Volunteer – neighbour dropped by to ask about volunteering at the gate. Cherie will follow up with our neighbourhood volunteer Marita, who knows this person.

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

Teahouse Open – people are calling to see if Teahouse is open. Outdoor patio seating and take-out is currently allowed.

Mother's Day Tea – will be on the Saturday May 8 and Sunday May 9 this year. There will be sittings at 11am, 1pm and 3pm on the patio.

Weddings – Barb has booked some weddings in May.

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

Georgian Ambassador – has donated another \$10,000 to the garden. He is arranging to have a uniform ready for the Costume Museum at Government House that will be featuring Princess Abkhazi's cocktail dresses. The ambassador has also produced a new book on Prince Nicolas. Barb suggested selling the booklet on Prince Nicolas in the gift shop to raise money for the garden. Cherie will follow up with TLC and Barb.

Costume Museum - Peggy's cocktail dresses and Nicolas's uniform will go on display starting May 25th at the Costume Museum at Government House. Cherie has asked for a Costume Museum hand out that we can put in our message board and hand out to visitors at the gate.

Gate Handouts – we have a variety of new handouts this year such as the mountain lion flyer and the TLC Naturalist Activity book for kids. Our visitors are browsing our selection and pick out what is of interest to them.

School Visit – a grade seven class from Monterey Middle School came to visit and draw in the garden. They donated \$75 to the TLC. Thank you Barb for arranging this. Cherie would like to invite more schools to visit the garden to learn about its history and about the nature within. She hopes to have an Abkhazi Garden Activity book published next year.

Waste Management – Currently Waste Management picks up our garbage. We will probably switch to a local company, Alpine, that does not add extra environmental and fuel fees and operates on holidays. We are locked into Waste Management until August 31, 2021. We will save a significant amount of money (\$2700 over 3 years) and get better service.

Painting Heritage Buildings – a grant from the Victoria Heritage Foundation can be as high as 50% of the costs of a paint job. A lot of people are applying this year and the VHF has informed us that they can only cover 26% of this cost. Some people may drop out of the program so this percentage is expected to increase. Simone Vogel Horridge, principal conservator, is still in the process of determining the heritage colours of our buildings.

Fencing – Cherie is meeting with neighbours to see if they will contribute to the costs of putting in a new fence. She is also applying for a federal grant and she is in touch with Rotary to see if they would contribute to our fence replacement project. The goal is to raise \$50,000 to replace fencing that is falling down with one consistent style that is by the front gate. Unfortunately lumber is at a record high right now and costs could go up.

COVID 19 Protocol – with COVID 19 cases rising and the variants being more contagious, Cherie has asked gate greeting volunteers and docents to wear masks in the garden. She also recommended that garden volunteers wear masks if they are near other volunteers or if they enter the Teahouse. All visitors are required to wear masks in the garden.

Message Board – A message board has been installed by front gate with information on the garden that love built, plant sales and our wonderful volunteers. Barb has a key and has a section on the message board to put information about the Teahouse. Now people can learn about what goes on in the garden as they walk by.

Square Payments – the square has brought in about \$1800 dollars since we opened (March 20). Over \$700 is for plant sales. We also have cash donations for admission and cash for plant sales.

The Land Conservancy - TLC is pleased to announce its 2021 VIRTUAL Passport to Nature Program and a Naturalist Activity Book for Kids. The Virtual Passport includes a video of Abkhazi Garden narrated by volunteers, Sue Hara and Marg Palmer.

Adjournment - Pam moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 am. Seconded by Marg.

Next Meeting: will be Friday, May 21 at 11am by zoom.