

Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Friday, July 16, 2021

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present: Samantha Beare, Dick Bullard, Barb Gunn, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson

Regrets: Cathy Armstrong

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of June 18, 2021 was motioned by Jacqui, seconded by Pam and carried by all present.

2. Agenda

Jacqui's Report (Abkhazi Garden Head Gardener)

Barb's Report (Owner/operator of the Teahouse)

Dick's Report (Informal Friends Group)

Cherie's Report (Abkhazi Garden Site Manager)

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

Georgian Garden Artwork – is putting metal artwork on hold for now. Jacqui has seen tile artwork that may be an option. Will send picture of this artwork to the board members.

Georgian Garden – is completely cleared except for an Australian bush that will be moved in September. Will plan the garden without a fence in place knowing what type of fence will be installed. (same as fencing by kiosk)

Prep for Greenhouse – ongoing reorganization of the service area for new greenhouse. Jim is helping with the foundation. Jacqui will pick up the framing for the greenhouse this weekend and will hire Nathan from Russel Nursery for the installation of the greenhouse.

Heat Wave Damage –The rhodos have been scorched. Some conifers on the rock are damaged and may have to be replaced. Jacqui hopes pruning will help rescue some of the plants.

Watering – Jacqui is spending a lot of time watering the plants during the heatwave and the current drought. She appreciates that the gate greeters are watering the plants on the plant stands.

Neighbour on North East Side – Richard Gill has been doing some clearing and checked in with Jacqui to make sure it is not a problem for our side of the fence. (Richard will help us with the replacement of a new fence between the two properties. Details to be worked out)

4. Barb's Report (Owner/operator of the Teahouse)

New Tables for the Patio – with grant money, Barb has bought new tables that her staff can lift and that can be placed together for bigger groups.

Busy Teahouse – with more restrictions lifted, more people are coming to have Tea in the garden. There are more out of town visitors.

Music in the Garden – an outdoor performance by Cree Metis Two-Spirit baritone Jonathon Adams and two viola players in their programme Métis Songs will perform at the Summerhouse on August 7th at 2pm. Blankets will be put out for people to sit on. No chairs. Maximum 50 people.

5. Dick's Report (Informal Friends Group)

Fence by Georgian Garden – some members of Friends would like to see a new fence go up by Georgian Garden sooner than later. Cherie explained that we have applied for a grant from the City of Victoria Cultural Infrastructure Grant for fencing. This grant with monies from TLC will allow us to renew fence around the whole property and save us \$20,000 when we do it all at once. We will know by the end of July if we get the grant. We will consider other options if we do not get the grant money.

Update of Plant Database – Jacqui is working on this project but it will take some time. She is remapping the zones of the garden and will include pictures of plants in the right zones. She plans to do more work on this in the winter months. She would like volunteers to take pictures of plants when they are in bloom with information on where they are located.

Volunteer Stat – Dick records the stats for volunteer hours. He noted that during one week 46 volunteers volunteered at Abkhazi Garden. This is a record number.

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

City of Victoria Cultural Infrastructure Grant – will know if we get the grant for fencing this month. If we get the grant, we can save \$20,000 by doing the whole property at once. Fence will look like the fencing by the kiosk.

Canada Healthy Community Initiatives Grant – grant money requested to cover the costs of a new permeable driveway with a centre design, lights for the garden and our future Georgian Garden. We also requested the grant to cover expenses that we have already paid for such as our new Boulevard garden, railing and widening of our pathways to the lower pond and our message board. Grant decision will be made in late August.

Victoria Heritage Foundation Grant – our buildings have all been hand washed. Wes from Paintworks will start painting the buildings on Monday, July 19th. Sidings will be a deep red brown colour and the trim will be a bluish mint colour.

Teahouse Maintenance – We have treated the outside for carpenter ants. That seemed to drive the ants inside. We called in pest control (Pet Scene Investigation) twice to treat the inside for ants. Ant problem seems to be resolved. Recently we had to replace the back flow preventor in the kitchen.

TV Commercial - Abkhazi Garden is in a commercial with TLC, executive producer, Cathy Armstrong. This commercial was produced by CHEK TV for Destination Greater Victoria and is now running. CHEK TV broadcasts on Vancouver Island, up to Powell River and as far away as Hope.

Abkhazi Garden Stats – We only had 1500 visitors in 2020 by the end of June. This year we have had over 4,800 visitors to the end of June. We have also brought in over \$25,000 at the gate. 74% in cash and about 26 % on the square. We have sold over \$4000 worth of plants: 84% on the square reader and 16% by cash.

Ambassador Visit – The ambassador plans to come in September to visit the Costume Museum to see the Abkhazi Collection. He would like to help hand out the Heritage BC Award certificates to our volunteers. We would like to invite the Lieutenant Governor to come as well.

Abkhazi Garden Open House – will be on Sunday, September 12th. Good time to sell off our plants. TLC will set up a table. Pam suggests that we tie in the Open House with Grandparents day.

Georgian Flag – one of our volunteers suggested we get a Georgian Flag to hang with a Canadian Flag at the garden. This is not easily done as there is a lot of protocol with hanging flags. Cherie recommends writing something up for the Message Board and summerhouse that talks about the shared heritage that Canada and Georgia share with the two flags side by side.

Artists in the Garden – artists have been invited to the garden to paint/sketch this year from Monday to Thursday. We also are doing a fundraiser with those artists who are interested. The artists can hang their art in the Teahouse from Sep 7 to Oct 12th. There will be a public showing on Labour Day Monday Sept 6 in the garden and in the Teahouse on Thanksgiving Day on October 11th. 50% of the sales will go to the artist and 50% will go to TLC. Many thanks to Barb for making this fundraiser possible.

Summerhouse Story – Samantha suggested we tell the story of the Summerhouse with archival pictures to show in the Summerhouse. Pam suggested we look at what they have done at Butchart Gardens for inspiration. Cherie will add the Summerhouse Story project to her winter work when the garden is not so busy.

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 11:55 pm.

Next Meeting: will be Friday, August 20 at 11am by zoom.