

**Meeting:** Abkhazi Advisory Board

**Date:** Friday, October 15, 2021

**Time:** 11am

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

## **Minutes**

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

**Regrets:** Cathy Armstrong

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

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of September 17, 2021 was motioned by Samantha, seconded by Pam and carried by all present.

### **2. Agenda**

**Barb's Report** (Owner/Operator of the Teahouse)

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

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

**Marg's Report** (Friends Group)

### **3. Barb's Report** (Owner/Operator of the Teahouse)

**Victoria Conservatory of Music** – planning for students to play in the garden on Mother's Day weekend. They have done this in the past.

**Festive Holiday Tea** – will run from Wednesday November 24<sup>th</sup> to Sunday January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**January Closure** – Teahouse will be closed for two weeks in early January. January 3-18.

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

**Abkhazi Garden Art Show Fundraiser** – Art show opened on Labour Day Monday in the garden and finished on Thanksgiving Monday in the Teahouse. We raised over \$1300 plus donation money at the gate. Eleven artists participated and submitted 21 pieces for the show.

**Abkhazi Lion** – the sale of the driftwood mountain lion by local artist, Tanya Bub will continue until the end of October. If it does not sell, it will be returned to Tanya in the first week of Nov.

**Fairfield Fall Fair** – Despite the rain, many people came to the TLC Abkhazi Garden table to fill in a draw for an Afternoon Tea for Two and many children came to answer questions about the garden to win a prize. We gave out 40 Fall Family passes to Abkhazi Garden that are good until the end of December. Many thanks to Marg, Lesley and Jenny for helping out at the table.

**East Side Fencing** -Tower Fence Products installed the fence in about three weeks and they have done a good job. The fence posts are very solid. Some deer made it into the garden and managed to eat some seeds Jacqui was planning to collect and chew on the Haiku cherry tree seedlings. We now have a good sturdy fence for the Georgian Garden.

**Joe and Linda Harvey Retire** – CHEK TV did a story on these remarkable volunteers who have contributed so much to the garden. We had a small celebration for Joe and Linda with the volunteers on Monday September 27<sup>th</sup>. Joe will pass on the test tubes and identification cards for the flower display stand for us to use next season.

**Summerhouse Display** – Lesley and Jim T started this project with Susan who was the former site manager. Cherie will work with Lesley, Jim T and Samantha to get this project together.

**Abkhazi Tray** - Peggy donated her parent's silver wedding tray as a trophy to give to a member who has made an outstanding contribution to the Victoria Rhododendron Society. Linda Gilmore received the Abkhazi Tray award at the HCP General Meeting on September 6th for creating the VRS Newsletter from March 2010 to November 2020.

**Seraphina Visits the Teahouse** – Seraphina, the former housekeeper of Nicolas and Peggy came to the house to donate a mirror to The Land Conservancy. Seraphina is open to being interviewed about her time with the Abkhazis. This will happen before May 2022 when she plans to move to French Beach. Many thanks to Barb who had a high tea prepared for her visit. Marg will send notes from a meeting with Seraphina that was arranged by the UVic Retirees Association in 2016.

**Geoff Bird - War Heritage** – Geoff is an instructor at Royal Roads University. He has just finished a documentary project on the 'Trees of Remembrance' along Shelbourne Street. He is interested in doing a project on Abkhazi Garden through a war heritage lens. Cathy and I will be meeting with him later this month.

**Remembrance Day** – we will be open on Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup> and we will be offering free tours to small groups of people. Cherie will be creating a Remembrance Day tour and will meet with our tour volunteers to plan this tour.

**Paladin Security** – we have now moved to Fall/Winter hours. The garden will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays and open from Wednesdays to Sundays from 11am to 4pm with last entrance at 3:30pm in sync with the Teahouse days and hours. Paladin will come for three days a week from Wed to Fri at 4:30pm to clear the garden and to lock up. Adjusted fee will be \$195/month for three days a week down from \$325 for five days a week.

**Canada Healthy Communities Initiative Grant** – we received zero funding from this grant. We were hoping to have funds to upgrade the walkway/driveway, to put lights in the garden and complete the fencing around the garden.

**Ambassador Visit** – the ambassador has been planning to come and see Prince Nicolas’s uniform with Peggy’s cocktail dresses at Government House and to hand out award certificates to our volunteers. He will be coming this fall. Date yet to be determined.

**Income/Expenses** – Last year, TLC shared the Income/Expenses of Abkhazi Garden with the Abkhazi Advisory Board and in turn we shared it with our volunteers. Cherie has requested that we share this information at our next AAB meeting in November.

**Front Gate Attendance** - Last year we had over 8,000 visitors at the gate. This year we will have over 13,000.

**Painted Heritage Buildings** – Pam has been in touch with Glen Ashmore who is researching the painting failure at Abkhazi. Cherie will follow up with him.

**Holiday Garden Lights** – Samantha asked about holiday lights in the garden. We were unable to secure monies for this project through grants. Could cost up to \$30,000.

**Volunteer Festive Holiday Event** – Cherie will work with Jacqui to plan an event.

### **3. Jacqui’s Report (Abkhazi Garden Head Gardener)**

**So Many Acorns** – Jacqui has been impressed with the volunteers and all the acorns they have raked up. One day they had 7 garbage cans full of acorns. There are still acorns to rake up as well as lots of leaves and bits of Garry Oak.

**Fall Plantings** – Jacqui has been planting and transplanting plants and she has put some bulbs in. She has planted garlic in the herb garden so the Teahouse can access garlic and garlic scapes next year.

**Propagation** – Former head gardener, Jo Wyld is working with Jacqui to propagate some of the garden rhodos. They are starting this project on a small scale. The rhodos will be transplanted into garden beds that will be installed where the old lean-to shed was situated. The shed has been dismantled.

**Greenhouse is Finished** – Jim built the benches and the heat lamp stands. He is adding in a rain barrel. The new Greenhouse is for propagating plants which means we will have a lot of plants ready for a plant sale next year. The old Greenhouse will be used for cold storage and for overwintering less hearty plants.

**Reorganization of the Service Area** – is almost complete.

**Georgian Garden** – the fence is now in place. The ambassador garden stone will be placed in the Georgian garden soon. There will be a rockery area with alpine plants along with grape vines on the fence. Jacqui will source seedless grapes so dogs are safe in the garden. The grape vines will be planted in the spring.

**Georgian Garden Art** – Jacqui has heard back from Bob Kingsmill. She will pursue possibilities of a mural or an amphora (an ancient vessel used in wine making). Pam suggested we look at his work at Fort and Vancouver and 1405 Douglas.

**Holiday Fundraiser** –ordered supplies from Russell Nursery to make wreaths, swags and table toppers. Sales will start the last weekend in November. Cherie will ask volunteers for plant cuttings soon before people prune their plants and Cherie will find volunteers to help create the wreaths etc....

**Victoria Garden Sprinklers** – will be coming the last Monday of October or the first Monday of November to blow out the system.

## **5. Marg's Report (Friends Group)**

**Indigenous History of the Garden** – David and Jim T are researching the indigenous history of the garden. They would like to include this history in the Summerhouse.

**Summerhouse Display** – Friends had started a project on the history of the garden with Susan who was the site manager before Cherie. A lot of work has been done on this already and Cherie will meet with Lesley, Jim T and Samantha to continue the project.

**Greenhouse Friends Plaque** – Marg inquired after the proposed plaque to be installed on the new greenhouse to thank the Friends of Abkhazi Garden for their support towards the new greenhouse. Cherie is working on this.

**Thrifty Smile Program** – Marg asked if the TLC used Thrifty Smile cards for fundraising. Jacqui wondered if TLC fundraised with the Bottle Depot. Cherie will follow up with Cathy.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 12:05pm.

**Next Meeting:** will be Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 11am by zoom. There will be no meeting in December.