

**Meeting:** Abkhazi Advisory Board

**Date:** Friday, November 19, 2021

**Time:** 11am

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

## **Minutes**

**Present:** Cathy Armstrong, Samantha Beare, Barb Gunn, Sue Hara, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson

**Regrets:** None

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

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of October 15, 2021, was motioned by Pam, seconded by Jacqui and carried by all present.

### **2. Agenda**

**Cathy's Report** (TLC Executive Director)

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

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

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

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

### **3. Cathy's Report** (TLC Executive Director)

**Abkhazi Income and Expenses Oct 1, 2020 – Sep 30, 2021** – With more gate donations mostly from local visitors and fundraising (plant sales and art sales brought in over \$10,000) our revenues were up this year. The Georgian ambassador donated \$10,000 and Friends of Abkhazi Garden donated over \$6000 this year when they dissolved their society. We had several maintenance expenses which included refinishing the Teahouse floors, painting our heritage buildings and replacing a fence by the new Georgian Garden. In 2021, The Land Conservancy subsidized the garden by almost \$7,000. In 2020, The Land Conservancy subsidized the garden by almost \$18,000.

**Ambassador Visit** – the ambassador is coming on Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> to visit the costume museum at Government House where the uniform for Nicolas and the Peggy's cocktail dresses were on display this summer as part of the Abkhazi Collection. Then the ambassador will come to the garden to honour our volunteers who won the Heritage BC team award for outstanding distinguished service. The ambassador is very disappointed that the wine he sent for the occasion will not arrive in time for the volunteer recognition event.

**Abkhazi Garden Documentary** – Geoff Bird, Royal Roads professor in the School of Communications and Culture and lead of war heritage initiatives will be filming the ambassador’s visit to the costume museum and our volunteer recognition event in the garden. He will interview the ambassador in the teahouse after the event. TLC will help fundraise \$15,000 for this documentary.

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

**Amazing Volunteers** – Jacqui has been impressed with the garden volunteers who have been working hard cleaning up the garden this Fall.

**Atmospheric River** – Jacqui gave a shout out to Sharon who came to volunteer during the heavy rainstorm on Monday. Both Jacqui and Sharon waded through water to keep the drains clear and the water running off the property. The South Lawn was covered in several inches of water at one point. There was a river running by the Summerhouse and they had to make a channel for the heavy flow of water.

**Winterizing the Garden** – volunteers have been distributing mulch around the garden.

**Reorganization of the Service Area** – is now complete. Jacqui will be buying a new heater for the new greenhouse.

**Georgian Garden** – the ambassador garden stone is now in place. Jacqui will be planting grape vines to grow on the fence and she will add a post in the middle for more grape vines. Jacqui is still considering what design element would best fit in this garden space such as a qvevri (amphora) that wine is made in or a mural depicting Georgian culture.

**Holiday Fundraiser** – Jacqui is doing a wreath making workshop on Thursday morning, Nov 25<sup>th</sup>. Six volunteers have signed up so far. Sales for wreaths and swags start on Saturday, November 27<sup>th</sup>. She has ordered some wreaths that just need decorating. Edible wreaths and table toppers and regular table toppers will be ready for sale in mid-December.

**New this year – Oak Bay Snowdrops** (naturally hybridized in Joe Harvey’s garden). Oak Bay snow drops are a mix of regular snow drops and giant snow drops. The snowdrops will be in a glass jar with ribbon and will sell for \$15 each.

**Holiday Lights** – Jacqui will add lights along boulevard fence for the holiday season. These will be white lights that will stay on the fence and can be used for different occasions. The moose will be kept inside the fence. A trench will be dug across the driveway/walkway for an extension cord.

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

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

**Holiday Closure** – The teahouse will be closed December 25 (Christmas Day), December 26 (Boxing Day), December 27 (Monday) and December 28 (Tuesday).

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

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

**Nothing to Report** – Friends did not have a meeting.

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

**Congratulations to Pam** – Pam recently won the City of Victoria 2021 Honorary Citizen Award. Members of the Abkhazi Advisory Board congratulated Pam on winning this prestigious award.

**Geoff Bird - War Heritage** – Geoff Bird has started working on the Abkhazi Garden documentary. A drone took pictures of the garden in the Fall and it will come back for more pictures in other seasons. Geoff will be filming the ambassador's visit on November 22<sup>nd</sup> (Details in Cathy's report) Geoff and Cherie were interviewed on the CBC radio morning show about the proposed war heritage documentary.

**Remembrance Day** – We offered free tours of the garden on Remembrance Day. We gave 5 tours. About 70 people visited the garden on a very rainy day. Many thanks to volunteers Judy, Jane and Theresa who came to do tours and welcome visitors at the gate.

**Awards and Ambassador Event** – the ambassador will arrive at the gate at 11am and honour our gate greeters (hand out certificates, book on Prince Nicolas and chocolates and thank our volunteers) at the gate, then the ambassador will move on to the service area and honour our garden volunteers and after that the ambassador will move to the summerhouse and honour our docents. Then the ambassador, Cathy and Jacqui will walk past the Georgian garden to the back of the Summerhouse. The ambassador will present an award to the TLC and the TLC will gift an Abkhazi painting to the ambassador. Then everyone will mingle over Afternoon Tea provided by Barb. Thank you Barb!

**Painted Heritage Buildings** – Cherie was in touch with Glen Ashmore, from the Master Painters and Decorations Assn regarding the bubbling paint. They will look at this problem in the spring.

**Holiday Fundraiser** – Cherie has volunteers scheduled to make wreaths and volunteers to sell holiday wreaths etc on the weekends. If no one is at the gate, visitors will be asked to pay for their item at the Teahouse. Thank you Barb! Cherie has contacted Helen Chesnut regarding our fundraiser. Pam suggested we contact the Victoria Horticultural Society and get it into their next newsletter.

**Volunteer Festive Holiday Event** – the date will be on Tuesday, December 21 at 11am. Barb will contribute some tourtieres. Volunteers have been asked to save this date. More plans to come.

**Plaque for Friends** – the plaque to thank the Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society will be picked up this afternoon and it will be presented in the service area with the ambassador present when we honour our garden volunteers at the volunteer recognition event.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:50am.

**Next Meeting:** will be Friday, January 21, 2022 at 11am by zoom. There will be no meeting in December.