

**Meeting:** Abkhazi Advisory Board

**Date:** Friday, January 21, 2022

**Time:** 11am

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

## **Minutes**

**Present:** Cathy Armstrong, Samantha Beare, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson, Lesley Wood

**Regrets:** Barb Gunn

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

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

### **2. Agenda**

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

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

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

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

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

**Ambassador Visit** – the ambassador came for a visit with 9 people (7 Georgian and 2 Polish visitors from Vancouver) on January 20, 2022 to deliver a decorated qvevri for the Georgian Garden. Cathy and Jacqui hosted the visitors. They celebrated the event with Georgian wine on the patio. The ambassador came for his last visit and will be leaving his post as the ambassador of Georgia to Canada on February 1. The ambassador plans to keep his country connected to Abkhazi Garden. The visitors would like to stay connected and support the garden.

**Zoning Corrections** – Currently Abkhazi Garden is still zoned for twelve townhouses. TLC plans to sell these densities to Aryze Developments Inc. Aryze will make this public soon. TLC will hold a pre-application meeting March 1. The heritage designation was put on the old greenhouse (now known as the potting shed) and needs to be changed to include the house, summerhouse and toolshed. TLC will need to develop a parking plan for the new zoning which could include a drop off spot, more bike racks and issuing eco-passes to volunteers. Pam noted that the John O'Reilly, City of Victoria Senior Heritage Planner, who has been helping TLC work through the changes, will be leaving his post next Thursday.

**Head Gardener Contract** – Cathy announced that Jacqui has been given a contract for two years.

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

**Abkhazi Garden Finances** – the Abkhazi Garden Revenues and Expenses 2021 financial document was shared with volunteers and supporters in the January 2022 E-news.

**Awards and Ambassador Event** – The ambassador of Georgia to Canada, Konstantin Kavtaradze, dressed in a chokha to honour our award-winning volunteers in Abkhazi Garden on Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>. He thanked our gate greeters at the entrance, our gardeners in the service area and our docents at the summerhouse. Everyone celebrated the occasion with Afternoon Tea (thank you Barb) at the back of the Teahouse under tents. The Ambassador presented the Ambassador's Award of Excellence to The Land Conservancy this year. The award is a way of recognizing those institutions and individuals whose efforts contributed to the closer political, trade, cultural, educational and people-to-people relations between Canada and Georgia. TLC executive director, Cathy Armstrong, presented the ambassador with a painting from Abkhazi Garden.

**Plaque for Friends** – the plaque to thank the Friends of Abkhazi Garden Society was presented in the service area with the ambassador and garden volunteers present on Nov 22, 2021. It was mounted on the new Greenhouse that day.

**Holiday Fundraiser** – We had a successful festive season fundraiser this year – over \$2000 in sales. We had lots of volunteers make wreaths and volunteers sell festive decorations at the gate. Our clients could also purchase our festive season items at the Teahouse. (Thank you Barb) Our Oak Bay snowdrops from Joe Harvey were a hit. Our edible wreaths and table centres of bay leaves, rosemary, peppers and garlic sold out quickly.

**Volunteer Festive Holiday Event** – We moved the event into the Teahouse. Jacqui and I served Georgian Wine, meat pies and other festive treats. TLC gave out toques to all our volunteers. A special thanks to Barb for opening the Teahouse to us and making the yummy meat pies.

**Omicron** – we must continue to follow COVID protocols in the garden. The COVID variant omicron is very contagious.

**Ambassador Leaving** – the ambassador is leaving his post at the end of January. He came back for one last visit on Jan 20, 2022 to deliver a decorated qvevri for the Georgian Garden. More info with Cathy's report.

**Snowstorms** – three snowstorms over the holidays. Jacqui and I shoveled off the boulevard garden and shoveled to the Teahouse. The sidewalk should be shoveled by 10am according to the city by-law.

**Back Gate** – when Jacqui was coming through the back gate before Christmas, it almost imploded on her. Tour Fence Products will be replacing the gate in the next 3 weeks with a chain link gate that is 8ft tall and 12ft wide.

**Teahouse Clean Up** – Barb cleaned out the Teahouse and wonderful things happened. There are now clear paths to the electrical panels in the Teahouse and the Teahouse shed. There was a pile of old binders and documents that belonged to the TLC. Among this pile of stuff is a binder of almost 400 slides and a slide projector and a copy of Peggy’s manuscript, ‘Dragon Aunt Remembers’. Cherie will get permission from UVic Archives to share the manuscript with the volunteers.

**LA 1949 in the Garden** – There are many theories on who the initials, L A, belong to in the garden which Cherie presented in the January E-News. Sandra Smith, a longtime friend and volunteer of the garden, indicated that the initials belong to Louis Antonio. She said relatives of Louis came to the garden and gave us a photograph book of the work done he had done in the garden. Saraphina mentioned he had a special section in the garden that the Balls took out. Cherie will try to track down the photograph book.

**Tentative Events 2022** – Cherie emailed out a document of tentative events for 2022. Please review. Jacqui mentioned that we have the same plant sale dates as the Pacific Hort Centre and we might want to reconsider these dates.

**Maintenance Project Research** – Cherie has sent out a document on the research that has been done on several projects for the garden. Top on her list is upgrading our electrical system. TLC would also like to develop plans for a new drive/walkway that is permeable with landscaping (such as pavers and thyme), wheelchair friendly, that will incorporate garbage screening at the upper section, bike racks and ..... Cherie will send out this research document after the meeting for AAB members to see.

**Chinese Lunar New Year** – Monday and Tuesday volunteers are being invited back on Tuesday, Feb 1 after a month’s break. It is Chinese Lunar New Year that day and it is the Year of the Tiger. Peggy was born in China in the Year of the Tiger. Cherie will bring a special snack with fortune cookies.

**Abkhazi Garden Documentary** – Cherie has been in touch with Geoff Bird regarding fund raising for the documentary. She has suggested a visit with the Rotary Club which operates out of the Union club where Peggy would take her quests for dinner.

**Abkhazi Garden Activity Book** – Cherie will be working with TLC staff to create an Abkhazi Garden Activity Book. It will look a lot like TLC naturalist book but with the love story and it will feature animals of the garden such as the turtles, humming birds, raccoons and squirrels and plants such as the Garry Oak Trees, Rhododendrons and Iris plants. We would like to have this ready to give out to school groups and school aged visitors in April.

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

**Maintenance Plan** – Jacqui has sent a maintenance plan and budget to Cathy regarding work to be done in the garden this year.

**Pathways** – plans to spread gravel on the gravel pathways. There has been quite a bit of erosion. Jacqui will add some boulders at the edges to keep the gravel in.

**Student Pruning** – Students from the Pacific Horticulture College are coming to Abkhazi Garden to prune on February 24<sup>th</sup>. There will be an instructor and two helpers to instruct the students on how to prune.

**Rhodo Casualty** – Our last snowstorm was very wet and the snow weighed heavily on our plants. One of the rhodos (not one of the rarer ones) located behind the Bella Bella Magnolia fell over. Jacqui had to cut it down and put some punky wood on the ground near where it stood. She hopes shoots come up from the root that is still in the ground.

**Bubble Wrap** – Jacqui installed bubble wrap into the new greenhouse before the snowstorms came which helped prevent the plants from freezing during the cold snap.

**Chipper/Shredder** – the chipper has been overhauled at a cost of \$1200. Unfortunately, the chipper had to be taken apart and it took over 15 hours to repair the machine and replace the blades and shredder knives.

**Pond Cleaning** – the pond needs cleaning this year. Jo Wyld cleaned it last time and quoted a fee of \$2000 for cleaning the pond this year. Jacqui is considering doing it this time.

**Treating Garry Oaks and Cherry Trees** – Jacqui would like Bartlett's to spray the Garry Oaks for winter moths and the cherry trees for the bora beetle this year.

**Hornbeam Trimming** – the hornbeam hedge on the west side needs trimming this year. The area by the service area was trimmed last year by the neighbours. This section of the hornbeam hedge will need trimming from the Abkhazi side this year.

**Irrigation System** – the irrigation system will start up again in April. There will be some head adjustments. Jacqui wants to make sure water is not hitting the Garry Oak bark on the Summerouse lawn.

**Georgian Garden** – Jacqui will be integrating the qvevri into the design of the garden. She will be adding a post to create a triangle shape from the fence that vines can grow across. She has some alpine plants growing from seed that are indigenous to Georgia to plant in the garden. She will also be planting two Molly the Witch peonies that are indigenous to Georgia.

**Plant Data Base** – Jacqui is updating the plant data base. She is hoping volunteers will id plants growing in the beds throughout the year. The volunteer would make note of when plants bloom. A picture of the plant will be added in the database.

**Mother's Day Event** – will think of something special to sell for Mother's Day at our plant stands. Jacqui may make use of the vases and or teacups that were donated from the Teahouse when Barb cleaned out the Teahouse.

**Memorial Stones** – visitors are walking by the memorial stones without realizing this is where Prince and Princess Peggy's ashes are scattered. Jacqui suggested that we put a special quote from Peggy at this location. Cherie agrees that we need to mark this area in a special way so people are aware of this special place in the garden.

**Princess Abkhazi Rhodo** – this rhodo is now situated by the rock where Princess Peggy sat when she had her lunch. The rock is located by the path that leads into the garden from the bottom of the stairs that go to the front door of the house.

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

**Next Meeting** – Friends will be meeting in the garden on February 4<sup>th</sup> in the service area. Friends plan to meet every two months.

**Tours** – Lesley asked about tours and training. Cherie responded that tours are on her agenda. The tour in place is a good tour but it does need some updating. Cherie will meet with volunteers to go over the tour in late February or early March.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 12:33pm.

**Next Meeting:** will be Friday, February 18, 2022 at 11am by zoom.