

Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Thursday, May 18, 2023

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

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

Regrets: Samantha Beare

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of March 17, 2023 was motioned by Cathy, seconded by Marg and passed unanimously.

2. Agenda

Cathy's Report (TLC Executive Director)

Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Barb's Report (Owner and Operator of The Teahouse)

Cherie's Report (Site Manager)

Marg's Report (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

3. Cathy's Report (TLC Executive Director)

Abkhazi Garden TLC Board Member – the TLC board is in the process of recruiting someone from Abkhazi Garden so the garden is represented on the TLC board.

Neighbour Parking Complaint – visitors to the garden are blocking driveways. To create more parking for visitors, Cherie will ask volunteers to park away from the garden such as by the school and Barb will ask her staff to do the same. Cherie will write a please park respectfully note in the notice board by the gate and ask gate greeters to remind visitors to be mindful of neighbours driveways. Cathy will write an email response to the neighbour and Cherie will visit in person to address her concerns.

Hidden Mobilities Disabilities Alliance Letter – in the letter HMDA requests more seating, parking close to site, railings on pathway steps and a map with seating locations on website. Cherie will write up a bench report that includes new benches and bench locations. Cherie will get quotes for hand railings needed in maple path and from lower pond to Yangtze River. Normally, visitors drop off persons with mobility issues by the gate. These visitors often sit on the bench inside the front gate to wait for their friends or family who are parking.

Abkahi Garden Documentary – Geoff Bird was unable to enter it into film festivals and has sent the link to TLC for their website. Bird is waiting to hear if Knowledge Network will run the documentary in November. Roger/Shaw would like to run it on their community TV channel. It has not been shown in Georgia yet.

4. Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Chipper Report –Chipping is now done by the Tuesday group which is more experienced with the machine so there are less break downs. Jacqui is still considering other options as the chipper needs constant repairs and she is hauling garden waste off site.

Spring Plant Sale –raised about \$4600 which does not include taxes and other expenses. Jacqui would like to do the plant sale a week later next year when more plants will be ready for sale and she would like to do a one day sale. There will be a one plant only limit for the Abkahi Princess Peony trees in the future as we have less to sell as pollination is difficult and propagation takes time.

Tree Assessment – Jacqui has asked the city for a permit to remove three of the Garry Oaks that are at risk to the garden. She is still waiting to hear from the city and will follow up soon with the city arborists.

Bartlett Trees Spraying – Bartlett was in to spray the Garry Oaks for winter moths. This will help to keep our Garry Oaks healthy.

Heather Replacement – the current heather along the Yangtze River is struggling in the garden. Jacqui would like to replace the heather with Wall Germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys*). This plant is evergreen and will produce pink flowers later in the summer. It is drought tolerant and deer resistant. Currently it is doing well in the Boulevard Garden. Cathy would like to see this done by sections to see how it looks.

Heat Exhaustion – Jacqui treated a volunteer for heat exhaustion. An ambulance was called and the volunteer went to the Royal Jubilee hospital for treatment. Jacqui has put coconut water in the volunteer cupboard for a source of electrolytes for heat exhaustion.

Hornbeam Hedge – our garden volunteer, Darren is helping Jacqui prune the hornbeam hedges as requested by our neighbours on the western edge of our garden. They will also prune the hornbeams on the Boulevard side.

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

Wasps – Barb is grateful for our wasp prevention strategy. Patio eggs with peppermint are now on the patio to discourage wasps and wasp traps are being placed strategically in the garden away from the patio. Guests are enjoying the smell of the peppermint on the patio.

Bees Hives – Barb has signed another contract with Please Bees Farms. The bees will be brought to the garden soon.

Mother’s Day High Tea – ran over two days and was very successful this year.

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

Key Vault Lock –the Victoria Fire Department has installed the key vault lock in the rock at the entrance to the Garden. The vault contains 3 keys: front gate, back door of the house and key to the Teahouse freezer shed where there is a second electrical panel.

Celebrating Jane – we celebrated Jane Andersen who has volunteered in the garden for over 21 years at our Welcome Back meeting in March. Cathy was on hand to recognize her contributions to the garden and presented her with a garden painting.

CHEK TV – on air personality, Tess Van Straaten did the weather from Abkhazi Garden in April to promote the garden and our plant sale. She interviewed Jane about volunteering and Cherie about upcoming events. Tess will be doing a story on Jim Sharp in June for CHEK’s vital people segment.

Social Media – our new social media volunteer, is Jhosseline Espinoza who is an international student from Peru at Camosun College who is studying marketing. She was trained as a lawyer in Peru. She is also working on the gate on Saturday mornings.

\$5000 Grant Disbursement – We are still waiting for \$5000 of the \$10,000 grant money for the documentary, Abkhazi Garden – Sanctuary from War. Cherie is following up on this.

55+ Lifestyle Show – Cherie, Emily, TLC communications coordinator, and volunteer Irena attended this event in March. Lots of people approached our booth and signed up for a free draw for an Afternoon Tea for Two. Thank you Barb.

Yoga in the Garden –Yoga instructor, Kaitlynn Raymond is offering an all levels class on Tuesdays from 6:30PM to 7:30PM. Kaitlynn will donate half of the fees to Abkhazi Garden.

Walkway/Driveway – research for this project is ongoing.

Monterey Middle School – 23 students from Monterey came to visit the garden. They all received an Abkhazi Garden Activity book and donated \$2 each. The librarian, Keely Thornton would like to take part in our International Peace Day next September.

International Peace Day – Thursday Sep 21. We would like to invite the ambassador of Georgia, our Lieutenant Governor and our volunteers of course. Students will paint peace rocks to be placed in the Georgian garden. Ed and Jeff from CHEK Upside have been invited.

Pamela Ball – dropped by the garden with a guest from out of town. She allowed me to take her picture and we talked about the garden. The Balls had a 20 year history with this garden and I hope to learn more about the history of the garden from them.

Artists in the Garden – Artists have been invited back to paint in the garden this year and participate in the Art Show Fundraiser.

New Red Eared Slider – someone found a turtle loose near Mackenzie Avenue and asked if we would give it a home at Abkahzi Garden. We now have 3 red eared slider turtles in the pond.

Pathway Repairs – Cherie is getting quotes on the cost to fix our pathways that could be tripping hazards.

Volunteer Summer BBQ – Our volunteer BBQ will be held on Monday July 10th. Cherie has contacted Thrifty Foods to see if they will help with gift cards for beef and vegetarian burgers, buns and condiments.

International Garden Tourism Conference – to be held in Victoria from Nov 1-4. Cherie would like to attend. There will be lots of conference attendees who would like to tour the garden.

7. Marg's Report (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

Driftwood Sculptures – Most members of the Friends group do not support the display of driftwood sculptures in the garden. Most believe visitors come to see the garden /landscape design/plants.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.

Next Meeting: will be Friday, July 21, 2023 at 11am by zoom.