

Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Friday, July 21, 2023

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present: Cathy Armstrong, Sue Hara, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson

Regrets: Samantha Beare, Barb Gunn

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of May 18, 2023 was motioned by Jacqui, seconded by Pam and passed unanimously.

2. Agenda

Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Cherie's Report (Site Manager)

Sue's Report (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

Cathy's Report (TLC Executive Director)

3. Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Garry Oak Trees – The city has declined Jacqui's request to remove 3 oak trees (#90, #103 and #296) as recommended by Bartlett Trees. The city will allow removal of #90 that is in the rhododendron woodland by the stairs to the Teahouse. #103 by the Summerhouse can be supported with pruning. Jacqui is asking the City to take a second look at #296 located at the corner of the driveway where it opens into a wide space. Jacqui recommends removal of the heavy branch on the north stem and to cable the four stems together if the city will not allow removal of this tree that could fall and cause considerable damage to the garden and possibly people in the garden.

Rhodo Pruning – Jacqui and volunteer Darren have started to prune the rhododendrons to remove dead wood and to bring the Rhodos down in height in advance of the loss of the Garry Oak tree canopy. She plans to take cuttings of rare Rhodos to propagate them for future plantings in the garden.

Propagation Partnership – Jacqui is working in partnership with Novus Wholesale Nursery to have rare plants from Abkhazi Garden propagated. Novus is better equipped to propagate plants especially through the cold winter months and can help Jacqui preserve the living heritage in our garden.

Fall Plant Sale – Jacqui is working on the inventory for the Fall Plant Sale which will be held on Sunday, September 10 at our Open House on Grandparent’s Day. She is working in partnership with wholesalers such as Island View Nursery to buy plants at a discount and receive donated plants for this sale.

Renewal of Upper Bedrock – Jacqui and volunteers are overhauling the upper bedrock above the Gunnera and opposite the Georgian Garden. They are exposing the bedrock and will add plants in the deeper soil such as repurposing the heather by the Yangtze River that is being replaced by the Wall Germander (*Teucrium Chamaedrys*). Jacqui is adding more plants in this area to add more colour in the garden.

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

Neighbour Parking Complaint – Cherie followed up with the neighbour who made the complaint and Chris, the neighbour, says things are a lot better. Chris appreciates the efforts we have made to improve the parking situation and she has put up a Private Driveway sign.

More Benches and Handrails – In response to the Hidden Mobility Disabilities Alliance letter, we have added more benches such as the corner bench at the Summerhouse made by Jim. We will be installing a metal rail from the lower pond to the Yangtze River and a wooden rail along the stairs by the Japanese Maples when the Garden is closed in October. The cost of installing two stone benches is around \$10,000. Jacqui will ask the Pacific Horticultural College to see if they would like to install the stone benches.

Maintenance in Fall – we have several maintenance projects planned for this Fall: Handrails as mentioned above, painting the outside pavers around the Teahouse , changing Fluorescent lights to LED in the Teahouse, painting deficiencies from Summerhouse, Oak Tree Removal and Moss removal on the Teahouse.

Walkway/Driveway – we have an estimate of \$55,000 for a new walkway driveway that includes re-grading the slope so it is less steep with a gravel surface bordered by brick pavers. Cathy will write a grant to help us proceed with this project. *Please note we have received the last payment of \$5000 for the documentary grant.

Volunteer Summer BBQ – about 40 volunteers came to our volunteer BBQ on Monday July 10th. Cherie organized the event and Jacqui grilled the burgers. Thrifty Foods donated \$150 towards this event. We are very grateful to Barb who let us take over the garden, use the BBQ and who donated two Afternoon Teas for Two at the Teahouse as part of a draw.

Vital People– on air personality, Tess Van Straaten did a story on Jim Sharp for CHEK’s vital people segment on July 2. She did a wonderful job recognizing Jim’s accomplishments in the

garden and that our volunteers are vital to the operation of the garden. *Please note that we now have over 60 volunteers who help in the garden.

Art Show Fundraiser – we have had more than 50 painters in the garden this summer. Some of them will take part in our art show fundraiser that starts on Labour Day Monday, Sep 4th. The art work is then displayed in the Teahouse from Sep 5- Oct 9th. On October 9th, Thanksgiving Monday, the art show will be open to the public.

Fall Plant Sale – will be on Sep 10th at our Open House on Grandparents Day. There is no admission by donation at the Open House.

International Peace Day – Thursday Sep 21. The ambassador of Georgia to Canada and our Lieutenant Governor cannot attend. The Georgian Embassy Head of Mission may attend. Cherie will be inviting members of the Georgian Diaspora of BC and she will invite Chris and Pamela Ball. Students from Monterey Middle School and Glenlyon Norfolk School will paint Peace Rocks and place them in the Georgian Garden and speak about world peace.

5. Sue's Report (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

Bookmarks – Marg would like to review the bookmark that was created to be handed out when volunteers are travelling or to be handed out at tabling events. Cherie will follow up with Marg.

Yangtze River – Sue finds visitors are confused about where the Yangtze River is and would like it to be clearer on our Welcome Guide handout. Cherie will review the guide to see how it can be improved.

6. Cathy's Report (TLC Executive Director)

Cathy's Retirement – Cathy will be retiring from her position of executive director of The Land Conservancy of BC on Friday, September 29th. Cherie acknowledged that Cathy has been an incredible asset to Abkhazi Garden and will be greatly missed. Her stewardship has saved the garden and allowed the garden to flourish.

Abkhazi Garden TLC Board Member – the TLC board has recruited Abkhazi Garden volunteer, Penny Crawford to TLC Board to represent the Garden. Penny is a fun and hard working Tuesday garden volunteer and is a guardian of the environment.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Next Meeting: will be Friday, Sep 15, 2023 at 11am by zoom.