

Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Thursday, September 14, 2023

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present: Samantha Beare, Penny Crawford, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Marg Palmar, Jacqui Paulson, Dianna Stenberg

Regrets: Barb Gunn

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of July 21, 2023 was motioned by Pam, seconded by Jacqui and passed unanimously.

2. Agenda

Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Cherie's Report (Site Manager)

Marg's Report (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

Dianna's Report (TLC Deputy Executive Director)

3. Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Garry Oak Trees – City of Victoria has confirmed the removal of tree #90 that is in the rhododendron woodland by the stairs to the Teahouse and the pruning of tree #103 by the Summerhouse and tree #296 located at the corner of the driveway where it opens into a wide space. Jacqui is waiting for the City permit and asked Bartlett Tree Experts to give a quote for this work and the pruning of the other Garry Oak Trees in the garden. City will decide if the Garry Oak Tree in the garden that leans over the Boulevard Garden, parking and powerlines is the City's responsibility or our responsibility.

Oak for Artisans – Jacqui is thinking of renting a mobile sawmill to cut the wood from the oak trees to cut pieces suitable for carpenters and artisans. She will contact Windsor plywood to see if they would be interested in the oak wood. Cherie will contact Camosun College and the Vancouver Island Woodworker's Guild.

Replacement Trees – Jacqui would like to replace the Garry Oaks in the Rhododendron Woodland with Acer Rubrum (red maple) trees that will bring colour in the fall or with the Parrotia persica (Persian ironwood) that is a tree native to the Black Sea area. The City of Victoria will be making suggestions for the replacement of the Garry Oak trees.

Irrigation – water usage has been up this summer to keep our plants growing in drought conditions. With temperatures cooling, we are currently using 75% less water.

Gardening Crew – Jacqui reports that the gardening crew has been fantastic this year. They have helped clean up the garden and keep on top of the invasives. Darren has been a huge help with pruning the hornbeam on the south border of the garden by the boulevard and Laurie was an enormous help with the plant sale.

Seasonal Sales – Jacqui is currently ordering supplies for our seasonal sales. Unfortunately, she will not have access to a huge greenhouse in the neighbourhood that she had last year and will plan to make seasonal decor at the garden.

Benches – Jim has varnished the two new wooden benches with boat varnish. One wooden bench is under the Wisteria arbour and the other bench is waiting to be placed in the garden.

Pacific Horticultural College – Jacqui has reached out to the college to see if they would rebuild the stone wall along the driveway and if they would help install a stone bench in a new location and create another one in the garden.

Ongoing Pathway Maintenance – there is now a bin in the service area for screenings so we can add gravel to the pathways as needed.

Abkhazi Princess Propagation – with a paintbrush in hand, Jacqui pollinated flowers of the Abkhazi Princess Peony tree. She marked the pollinated flowers at the back of the tree. She reports that one of the pollinated seed pods was taken and may have been stolen.

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

Welcome to Dianna and Penny – Cherie introduced and welcomed Dianna as the new executive director of The Land Conservancy of BC who will be replacing Cathy later this month and who will be leading the Abkhazi Advisory Board. She also introduced and welcomed Penny to the Abkhazi Advisory board. Penny who is a garden volunteer will be elected to TLC board at the AGM on September 23rd. Abkhazi Garden will soon have representation at the TLC board level. Penny will also sit on the Abkhazi Advisory Board.

Thank You Samantha – Samantha is resigning from the Abkhazi Advisory Board. We appreciate her time and thoughtful input on the board. We are pleased that she is continuing as a docent in the garden on Wednesday mornings.

Abkhazi Garden Parking – In August the City of Victoria removed 16 parking places on the north side of Fairfield Road. The city has not marked this area with yellow curbs or adequate no stopping at any time signs, thus people have been getting tickets. To help improve parking, the city has suggested having 2 or 3 hour parking limits on the boulevard parking section. AAB does not support this proposed parking time limit. Cherie will work with Dianna to write a letter to city Councillor, Matt Dell, outlining our pedestrian and parking concerns.

Art Show Fundraiser –about 200 people attended our art show fundraiser on Labour Day Monday, September 4th. While only one painting sold, we had a lot of publicity for the event and brought in more donations. We sold 9 wooden bowls designed by our neighbour Duncan Kemp at this event. The art show continues in the Teahouse until Thanksgiving Monday, October 9th. The art show is open to the public on Oct 9th as the Teahouse is closed.

Open House on Grandparents Day and the Fall Plant Sale – 465 people attended the Open House and Fall Plant Sale. We raised about \$3000 from this one day event which included selling 9 wooden bowls. The Fall Plant Sale ends on Thanksgiving Monday.

Fall Fairfield Fair – we will have a table at this event on Sunday, September 24th to promote the gardens and Jacqui will supply plant cuttings for their crown making table.

International Peace Day – Thursday Sep 21. Still waiting to hear if the Charge D'affaire is attending and how many members of the Georgian Diaspora of BC will be coming. Chris and Pamela Ball will be attending. Students from Glenlyon Norfolk School will paint peace rocks and place them in the Georgian Garden and present a choral reading of 'The rock Cries Out to us Today' by Maya Angelou at the Summerhouse.

Thank You Barb – for holding the art show in the Teahouse and providing our artists with tea at the outdoor show, donating 'High Tea for Two' so we could have a draw at the Open House, Fall Fairfield and for a social media contest. A huge thank you for hosting a high tea for International Day of Peace in the Teahouse.

Garbage – we are often left with waste bins in front of our garden gate during opening hours as GFL has had a difficult time maintaining their pick-up schedule. They have been having troubles with staffing and respond to our calls when regular pick-ups are missed.

Statement of Significance – Cathy and Cherie have worked with the City of Victoria to update the Statement of Significance.

Maintenance in Fall – we have several maintenance projects planned for this Fall: Metal handrails by the lower pond , wooden handrails by the Japanese Maples, painting the outside pavers around the Teahouse , changing Fluorescent lights to LED in the Teahouse, painting deficiencies from Summerhouse, and Moss removal on the Teahouse.

International Garden Tourism Conference – Cherie will be attending this conference from November 1-4 in Victoria.

Cathy's Retirement – we will acknowledge Cathy's retirement at the International Day of Peace event. We have a gift of an Abkhazi Oak Wooden Bowl for her from the Abkhazi Garden team. (Jacqui, Cherie, volunteers)

Abkhazi Garden Logo – we would like to have a logo for Abkhazi Garden that includes TLC. Jacqui suggested that it could be an outline of rhododendron flower as the garden is famous for its Rhodos. Dianna will give it some thought.

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

Rhodo propagating – Marg informed us that Calvin Parsons, past president of the Victoria Rhododendron Society and volunteer at the HCP , was coming to Kildonan to propagate one unusual rhododendron. He might be of interest to Jacqui for her propagating of rhodos.

Bookmarks – The Friends Group has some suggestions to improve the bookmark that was created to be handed out when volunteers are travelling or to be handed out at tabling events. Marg would like a better picture of the garden, the hours of to be on the back and to have a lighter colour on the back side.

6. Diannas's Report (TLC Deputy Executive Director)

New Chair – Dianna will be replacing Cathy as chair of the Abkhazi Advisory Board.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:22 pm.

Next Meeting: will be Thursday, Nov 16, 2023 at 11am by zoom.