

**Meeting:** Abkhazi Advisory Board

**Date:** Thursday, January 18, 2024

**Time:** 11am

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

## **Minutes**

**Present:** Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson, Marg Palmar, Dianna Stenberg

**Regrets:** Penny Crawford, Barb Gunn,

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

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of November 16, 2023, was motioned by Jacqui, seconded by Pam.

### **2. Agenda**

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

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

**Marg's Report** (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

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

### **3. Jacqui's Report** (Head Gardener)

**Winterization of the Garden** – all green waste chipped or hauled away. Asked neighbour, Peter, for electrical back up if electrical failure to Greenhouse. Our electrical held up during record cold weather.

**Abkhazi Garden Festive Market** – raised over \$4400. Added gift items such as flower presses, bonzai kits and bird seed kits for kids. Will organize for two-day event next year with all items ready followed by a second weekend to sell remaining items off.

**Maintenance Plan and Budget** – preparing a budget with expenses which will include annual expenses and estimated expenses.

**Student Pruning** – students from the Pacific Horticultural College will be coming to prune on Feb 22.

**Hornbeam Hedge** – TLC has been sharing the cost of trimming the hornbeam hedge that grows on our property with two neighbours. It is our turn to do the trimming and Bartlett Tree Experts has quoted a cost at \$4500. Jacqui and Cherie would like to meet with both neighbours to see if we could remove these hornbeam trees and replace them with something that is cheaper to maintain.

**Garry Oak Trees** – Bartlett Tree Experts have been booked to remove #90 Garry Oak on Mon Jan 22 and Tue Jan 23. Jacqui is renting a wood splitter and volunteers will spilt the wood and stack it. Some wood will go to the Island Woodturners Guild and some will be sold for firewood. Jacqui will provide refreshments.

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

**2024 Garden Events** – Cherie sent out a calendar of events for 2024. The Georgian Embassy staff hope to celebrate Georgia's Independence Day in May at Abkhazi Garden and introduce their new ambassador.

**Fundraising Events** – We raised \$4400 at the Abkhazi Garden Festive Market, Spring Plant Sale - \$4600 and Fall Plant Sale - \$3000. Total of \$12,000 for these events. These amounts of money are before taxes and do not include expenses. Please note that ongoing plant sales, separate from the event sales, has not been included.

**Donations In Lieu of Flowers** – In the fall, two Time Colonist obituaries requested that donations be made to Abkhazi Garden. \$400 came in to TLC and \$300 was dropped off at the gate to Cherie.

**Garden Tour Donations** – Seaquest Explorations donated \$2500 this year, up from \$2000 last year and Niche Travel donated \$500 this year, same as last year. There are tour companies that do tours at the garden independent of the Teahouse. Cherie would like to find out how many are coming and to ask for a donation for the garden.

**Grandfather Clock** – Prince Nicolas gifted the Abkhazis' Grandfather Clock to Robert Mackay, his trusted lawyer for many years. Robert and Isabelle Mackay wanted to donate the Grandfather Clock back to the Garden after their deaths. Both Robert and Isabelle are now deceased and their children are arranging to give the clock to Abkhazi Garden. Barb does not want to showcase it at the Teahouse.

**Maintenance Report** – Cherie sent out a Maintenance Report for 2024. We would like to upgrade our Driveway this year to a walkway/driveway that will include a permeable part down the centre with pavers on either side for walkers and wheelchairs. Unfortunately, we did not get a gaming grant to help us and will need to reapply and apply for other grants. The cost will be over \$60,000.

**Burst Water Pipe** – a water pipe burst above the staff washroom in the Teahouse on Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup>. We called in Rather Be Plumbing. We need a Cold Weather Protocol for the Teahouse where the heat is higher in the water pipe rooms and we leave a steady drip of water in all the sinks.

**Insurance for Fallen Oak 2022** – We have sent our insurance claims in except for the Proline Roofing invoice for the kiosk. The insurance company will be paying in advance for the vehicle leaf of the front gate that should come in March.

**Parking** – Cherie is still arranging to meet with City of Victoria, Councilor, Matt Dell about parking and pedestrian concerns. Matt has a busy schedule and finding a time to meet is challenging.

**Photography Contest** – the contest has started. We have guidelines and the waivers ready. Pam Madoff will join the judging panel that includes myself, Jacqui and Rick Shapka who is a CAPA certified judge.

**Volunteer New Year Luncheon** – new date is Tuesday, February 6 with a 11:30am sitting and a 1pm sitting. We will be celebrating Lois George and Sue Hara at the 11:30am sitting.

**Abkhazi Garden Presentations** – Cherie has been invited to give a talk about Chinese connections to the Abkhazi Garden at the January meeting of the Victoria Canada China Friendship Association. She will also give a talk to the Fundy Gardeners near Valentines Day. She has also been invited to give a talk to the Burnside Gorge Seniors and hopes a volunteer can do this talk.

**Making the Garden More Accessible** – suggests keeping a wheelchair accessible near the front gate. Would like a map with the route for a walker or wheelchair through the garden with benches marked to hand out at the front gate. Jacqui can create this map.

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

**Bookmarks** – likes the new bookmark

**Abkhazi Logo** – suggests that we do not go with an oak leaf because that is Oak Bay's logo and we need something that is separate from that and more distinct to the Garden such as the rhodo.

#### **6. Diannas's Report** (TLC Executive Director)

**Rezoning Update** – The City of Victoria's Committee of the Whole voted to have a public hearing regarding the Aryze Development in late January or the beginning of February.

**Abkhazi Garden Logo** – Emily is working on it.

**Gaming Grant/Donations** – grant denied due to high volume and with suggestions to strengthen our application. We can apply for this grant again this year.

**QR Donation Sign** – prepared two QR donation signs for the front gate. Cherie posted a sign up at the gate. Will check with Lisa to see if anyone has made a donation from this QR code yet.

**Liability Insurance** – Dianna sent out the following information regarding insurance:

*Commercial General Liability Policy – This provides coverage for bodily injury to 3rd parties, and damage to 3rd party property. Volunteers are included as insureds. Which means if they are performing a task in their duties for TLC which I believe the gardens fall under, and they lets say left out a rake and a 3rd party tripped over it and was injured and brought a suit against TLC they would fall under this coverage.*

*If that volunteer is injured in their duties for TLC, they would be covered under the TLC Volunteer Accident policy.*

*The Directors and Officers also includes volunteers.*

**Solicitation Codes** – set up for our various fundraising events such as the Spring Plant Sale. These codes will be sent to Jacqui so she can code her invoices accordingly.

**West Coast Seeds Fundraiser** – TLC will be running a fundraising campaign by selling West Coast Seeds. TLC will receive 40% of the profits. It runs from Jan22 to Feb 9<sup>th</sup>. Cherie has put up a poster at the front gate and will share this with our volunteers and supporters.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

**Next Meeting:** will be Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 11am by zoom.