

Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present: Penny Crawford, Sue Hara, Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson, Dianna Stenberg

Regrets: Barb Gunn

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of January 18, 2023, was motioned by Jacqui, seconded by Pam.

2. Agenda

Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Cherie's Report (Site Manager)

Sue's Report (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

Dianna's Report (TLC Executive Director)

3. Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Rhodo Damage – a couple of Rhodos by the path in the Rhododendron Woodland are damaged from our winter season. One has brown leaves but has new buds so it looks like it is recovering. Another Rhodo beside it has been cut back hard. Jacqui plans to find a decent sized unusual Rhodo to plant in this area.

Replacement of Heather – more Teucrium is being planted along the Yangtze River to replace the Heather. Some of the Heather will be planted in the upper bedrock and some will be potted for sale at the Spring Plant Sale.

Spring Plant Sale – will be the last weekend in April - Saturday, April 27 and Sunday, April 28 from 11am-4pm. Same day as the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific.

Seedlings in Potting Shed (Jacqui's Office) – planted seeds later this year and will have plants to sell throughout the summer as they will not be ready for the Spring Plant Sale. Had to replant some seeds as an animal ate some of the planted seeds.

Student Pruning – students from the Pacific Horticultural College came to prune on Feb 22 in the afternoon. There were fewer students participating than last year. Enrolment is down in hort courses this year.

Head Gardeners Meeting – Jacqui met with the head gardeners of the following public gardens: Horticultural Centre of the Pacific, Hatley Park Gardens at Royal Roads and Milner Gardens and Woodlands to discuss trends and challenges in their respective gardens.

Pond Clean Up – time is running out to get all three ponds cleaned up before the Garden is open seven days a week. Jacqui hopes to get the upper pond cleaned and possibly the middle pond this week.

Garry Oak Trees – Bartlett Tree Experts removed #90 Garry Oak on Mon Jan 22 and wood splitting took place on Tue Jan 23. A big thank you to Penny, Brian, Mark and Richard who helped. Made \$600 on the sale of the firewood and about \$400 in donations for the artisan wood.

Hornbeam Hedge – Jacqui and Cherie will meet with both neighbours of the shared Hornbeam hedge in the service area to discuss pruning and cost on Monday, March 25. Removal is no longer an option as the Hornbeams provide privacy to the neighbours and extend the view from the Garden.

4. Cherie's Report (Site Manager)

Fundraising Update – 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. Our ongoing plant sales at the gate brought in about \$4400 for a total of \$16,400. These amounts of money are before taxes and do not include expenses.

Grandfather Clock – Prince Nicolas gifted the Abkhazi Grandfather Clock to Robert Mackay, his trusted lawyer of many years. The clock has been donated back to the garden and will be on display in the Gift Shop.

Walkway Grant – Cherie will apply for a City of Victoria's Cultural Infrastructure Grant to help raise funds for the walkway. The grant's maximum is \$50,000 or 50% of the project's cost.

Insurance for Fallen Oak 2022 – We have received over \$12,000 from the insurance claim so far and expect another \$1200 to come in. The insurance company paid in advance for the vehicle leaf of the front gate that should come in early April.

Parking – Cherie met with City of Victoria, Councilor, Matt Dell about parking and pedestrian concerns. We discovered that there is no longer residential parking across the street which frees up 2 to 3 spots. Matt supports our request for a cross walk to the garden and will follow up with the city.

Photography Contest – the contest has started. We will soon have a winner for the Winter Season and have several pictures to choose from for our Calendar Fundraiser.

Volunteer New Year Luncheon – held on February 6th. We had two sittings and honoured Sue Hara (17 years) and Lois George (18 years). We are grateful to Barb of the Teahouse who provided the space and some yummy meat pies.

Abkhazi Garden Outreach – presentations to the Victoria Canada China Friendship Association, Fundy Gardeners in New Brunswick and the Burnside Gorge Seniors (Lesley presented). We now have 2 flash drives with an intro to the TLC, the Abkhazi Garden Spring Video and the Abkhazi Garden documentary ready to use for outreach. The Oak Bay Garden Club has requested a presentation on November 22nd. Donations range from \$50 to \$300.

55+ Lifestyle Show – attended lifestyle show on Tuesday, March 19th at Pearkes Arena with volunteers, Irena and Judy. Over 200 people attended our booth and entered a draw for An Afternoon Tea for Two at the Teahouse. Many people were interested in our Spring Plant Sale. Our bookmarks with Abkhazi logo were very popular as well.

New Season Starts – volunteers will be back at the Gate and at the Summerhouse starting Friday, March 22nd. Lesley cleaned and organized the Summerhouse. Cherie will host a Welcome Back Tea in the Teahouse on Tuesday, March 26th. (Thank you Barb)

Electrical Review – fire department was called as smoke was smelled in the Teahouse on Feb 9th. They did not find the cause. Cherie asked Peak Electrical to do a safety inspection of the house and freezer shed. Peak Electrical reported that our overall condition of the electrical system is good but recommends improvements and will send a quote for this work.

Volunteer Insurance/Safety Protocols – Penny will help Cherie write up information on volunteer insurance coverage to share with the volunteers. Jacqui would like Cherie to remind volunteers to be safe in the garden. Cherie will review safety protocols with volunteers at the Welcome Back Tea.

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

Abkhazi Logo – liked the circle logo, and suggested that the TLC be in smaller text, flower image not filled in and to remove the “garden that love built”.

6. Diannas's Report (TLC Executive Director)

Volunteer Victoria – posting out for volunteers at Abkhazi Garden

National Trust – meeting had a heritage focus.

Flower Count – attended the flower count kick off at Abkhazi Garden on Mon, Mar 4th and Dianna was featured with Bruce Williams, CEO of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Cliff McNeil-Smith, The Mayor of Sidney (2023’s Bloomingest Community Winner) and Paul Nursery, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria the front page of the Times Colonist.

TLC Budget – will be presented to TLC board later this month.

Abkhazi Garden Logo – presented new logo options designed by Emily. Members gave their feedback. Will send Cherie the new designs to review.

Rezoning Update – nothing to report. Still waiting for public hearing regarding the Aryze Development.

Passport to Nature – can now be accessed online. The Abkhazi Garden Spring plant sale, Fall plant sale and Festive Market are included this year.

TLC Landmark Newsletter – out in the mail today.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

Next Meeting: will be Thursday, May 23, 2024 at 11am by zoom.