



Meeting: Abkhazi Advisory Board

Date: Thursday, May 23, 2024

Time: 11am

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present: Pam Madoff, Cherie Miltimore, Jacqui Paulson, Dianna Stenberg, Lesley Wood

Regrets: Penny Crawford, Barb Gunn

1. Adoption of Minutes

Approval of the Abkhazi Advisory Board minutes of March 21, 2024, was motioned by Jacqui, seconded by Pam.

2. Agenda

Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Cherie's Report (Site Manager)

Lesley's Report (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

Dianna's Report (TLC Executive Director)

3. Jacqui's Report (Head Gardener)

Bartlett Tree Experts – have done the annual spraying of the Garry Oaks and the Cherry Trees. Bartlett will be back in July to trim the hornbeam hedge that borders our neighbours in the service area.

Redesign of Edible Garden – volunteers have divided and transplanted edible flowers and herbs in the section by the tool shed and freezer shed. The garden area in front of the weeping spruce has been cleared. Victoria Garden and Sprinklers will come and rearrange the sprinkler system in this area.

Rebuild of Rock Walls – volunteers, Jock and Laurie, have been rebuilding the rock walls at the back of the house towards the pond. This will prevent soil erosion and allow for new plantings. Jacqui will source a conifer with structural height for this area.

Lily of the Valley Zone – this area is an ongoing project. Half of the Lily of the Valley zone has been cleared, Osmanthus shrubs have been planted to match those further up the pathway and camas bulbs will be planted.

Abkhazi Princess Peony Tree/ Bella Bella Magnolia – last two Abkhazi Princess Peony trees were sold at the Spring plant sale. We have one Bella Bella Magnolia tree left for sale.



Propagation in the Garden – Jacqui will no longer propagate the Abkhazi Princess Peony tree but will concentrate on plants that are easier to propagate. She will cultivate Rhodos from the garden and the cherry trees. She plans to propagate Teuchrium which is easy to do. This is a very popular plant as it is deer resistant, drought resistant, good in cold weather and attracts bees. She hopes to do some Bella Bella in the future as they self-pollinate but warns they take several years to get to be the right size for selling.

Propagation in the Service Area – the summers are hot and we do not have enough power for fans in the green house. Jacqui has purchased a 24ft by 12 ft shade cover (\$170 cost). Jim will help install it with costs about \$300 for lumber etc. Jacqui would like to pay for this from the tool fund.

Jacqui on Holiday – from June 7 to June 23. Laurie, volunteer on Mondays and Tuesdays, will be deputy head gardener on Mondays and Tuesdays when Jacqui is away. Jacqui will ask other volunteers to help with the watering.

Wifi Through Garden – Jacqui would like wifi in garden so she can remote control irrigation, attend AAB zoom meetings and for visitors to access. Cherie will talk to Barb about boosting wifi access in the garden.

4. Cherie's Report (Site Manager)

Spring Plant Sale – Our Spring Plant Sale was a huge success. We raised over \$4500 on Sat April 27 up from \$3700 in 2023 and over \$1250 on Sunday up from \$900 in 2023. That's an impressive increase of 25%.

CHEK TV – TV personality, Tess Van Straaten promoted our Spring Plant Sale in April. She was in the garden in May to do a story on Sue Hara for CHEK's vital people segment which will air in June. Ed and Jeff from the Upside will be coming to our Volunteer BBQ on July 8th to promote our garden and wonderful volunteers. The Upside will interview Dianna and Jacqui.

Abkhazi Garden Volunteer BBQ – will be on Monday, July 8th from 5pm-7pm during CHEK's 5pm and 6pm news. TLC will bring the fixings for beef and veggie burgers and drinks. Volunteers will be asked to bring a salad or dessert. Thrifty Foods (\$150) and Save-On-Foods (\$100) are sponsoring this event.

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 is now on display in the Gift Shop. Many thanks to Jim who helped install the clock, repair it and shine it up.

Dog Water Dish Artifact – Christopher Ball dropped off a water dish for dogs that the Abkhazis had for their shelties. The dish is yellow and is being used at the Summerhouse. Christopher and Pamela are sorting through their Abkhazi items and may donate more artifacts in the future.



Victoria Cultural Infrastructure Grant – We applied for the 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. This grant was submitted in April and we have not heard yet if we are successful or not.

Mobility Challenged Map – we would like a map for visitors with mobility challenges to show what routes to walk and what benches we have to sit on. Jacqui will send a map to Dianna who will create a map with walking paths and benches.

Parking – a neighbour from up the street was upset with parking at our Plant Sale. He threatened to call the police as people were parking on a yellow curb. I walked up the street and the yellow curbers were gone. I will continue to work with the city to improve our parking.

Artists in the Garden – artists have been invited to paint in the garden again. We have a few artists already signed up for our art show fundraiser in September.

Photography Contest – the contest continues. We will be selecting a winner for the month of April soon.

Tours in the Garden – our volunteers have given tours for Wells Gray Tours and Newcomers. These tours are arranged through Barb at the Teahouse and we receive \$15 per person. We are now having bike tours from The Pedaler Cycling Tours and Rentals. They donate \$5/person at the gate. Niche tours donates \$7/person.

Electrical Review –Peak Electrical did a safety inspection of the house and freezer shed and recommended several improvements which we proceeded with at a cost of \$2,341.50. Please note that we now have a new panel in the freezer shed. The desk in the Teahouse office will need to be moved away from the heater to complete the improvements for safety.

Railing Now Completed – Matthew from Coastline Metalworks has finished installing the railing from the lower pond to the Yangtze River at a cost of \$1948.10. This will provide more safety for visitors walking down the stairs.

Gardens BC – sent a photographer (Geoffrey Tomlin-Hood, Director of Photography at The Number), to take pictures of the garden. I have asked Gardens BC if we can use these pictures to showcase our garden. We also had Gardens BC, social media and marketing coordinator, Kristi Bellis take photos and reels of the garden this week which we will share on social media.

Canada’s Garden Council – is now **Garden’s Canada** and we can sign up as a heritage garden for \$250.

Yoga in the Garden – will be on Wednesdays from 6:30pm-7:30pm starting on June 26th.



Wildlife in the Garden – Anna’s hummingbird nest was spotted hanging over the pathway in the rhododendron garden. One of our turtles made an escape past the front gate and a motorcycle rider brought it in from off the road. Our mallard duck took her 11 ducklings for a swim in the middle pond and in the lower pond and the ducklings have not been seen since. Kate from Bees Please brought in spring bees from New Zealand and they are doing very well.

Compost Pick Up – Cherie is working with GFL to have regular pick up of compost on Mondays.

Flyer with Spring Video and Documentary – would like a flyer with QR code for both to give out at the Kiosk and Summerhouse. Cherie will make up a draft to send to head office.

Lesley’s Report (Friends of Abkhazi Garden Group)

Walkway Funding - would like to see more promotion of fundraising for the new walkway at the gate. Cherie would like to see this as well. Dianna will look into this.

Tapping Donations at the Gate – Marg has sent examples of boards set up for tapping donations. These examples appear to be inside and Cherie is not sure how that would work outside at Abkhazi. Cherie will visit the Art Gallery to check out the set up and see if they give tax receipts for donations.

6. Diannas’s Report (TLC Executive Director)

TLC Budget – The 2024 budget was passed by the board. April 30 is the end of the fiscal year and the new budget cycle starts May 1.

Searching for New Board Members – TLC is looking for new board members leading up to the September TLC AGM.

Rezoning Update – Dianna will be in touch with Aryze to see how things are progressing as many people are concerned about the sign about development in the Boulevard Garden.

TLC Landmark Newsletter – asked if Jacqui could write an article on sustainability for Fall newsletter. The deadline would be in August.

Capital Projects Gaming Grant – asked Cherie if she could do the capital project gaming grant this year to help secure money for the Walkway. The deadline will be in August.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Next Meeting: will be Thursday, July 25, 2024 at 11am by zoom.