

# SRI LANKA – CANADA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION OF EDMONTON

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

**Date:** January 29, 2006

**Venue:** SLCFA Premises at 2913 – 66 Street Edmonton, AB

**1.0 Call to Order:** The President, Chris Senaratne, called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. with 41 members in attendance. The meeting commenced with the singing of the National Anthems of Sri Lanka and Canada. At the request of the president, the house observed a minute of silence in memory of the late Nelson Appuhamy who was a member of the SLCFA.

**2.0 Adoption of the Agenda:** The following items were added to the proposed agenda:  
9.5 Holding of two SLCFA-sponsored functions simultaneously – Savitri Senaratne  
9.6 Campaign to donate medical textbooks to Ruhuna University Medical Faculty (Ransirimal Fernando). The house accepted a motion to approve the amended agenda (Proposed: Upali Samarakoon, Seconded: Mano Senaratne)

**3.0 Adoption of the Minutes of the Mid-Year General Meeting:** Minutes of this meeting were adopted with the following changes to the minutes as suggested by Dilu Fernando: a) 4.1 change the phrase “the previous EC ...” on line 2 of para. 1 to “a previous EC ...” (Proposed: Suresh Fernando, Seconded: Ransirimal Fernando).

**4.0 Matters Arising Out of the Minutes:** 5.2 The EC wrote to the Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission and got approval to cover this expense; Action items under Section 6 were deferred to be discussed under New Business.

**5.0 President’s report:** The President tabled his report (see attached). This report summarized the events that took place during the 11 months under review. The EC managed the SLCFA activities within the financial guidelines. However, the President was dismayed that some members violated the code of ethics by directly approaching the AGLC to air their grievances. Chris expressed his appreciation to the EC members and other members who were instrumental in organizing events, managing the premises and the seniors’ function. He personally thanked his family as well as the spouses of the EC members for their unfailing support.

First he called the EC members for their comments and then for open discussion. The Membership Director, Gothami Wickremasekera, presented an e-mail message on behalf of the EC from the Vice-President, Jay Nagendran (see attached). There were comments from the members about the sub-standard venue used for the Calgary Encounter and lack of camaraderie by the members of the EC during the Appreciation Night. The Secretary informed the membership of the difficulties encountered in finding a suitable venue and the reasons for settling with the selected venue. The

President stated that he was surprised by the statement on the lack of camaraderie at the Appreciation Night, and if the perception was that, it was purely unintentional.

**6.0 Treasurer's report:** The Treasurer, Lakshaman Samarasinghe, tabled his report (see attached). In his report, Lakshaman summarized the current status of the funds, revenue, expenditure and net income for the year and commitments made during previous years. He pointed out sections that need revision and/or improvement and the need to either reduce the assessed value or write off items that were imported for Heritage Festival.

In response to queries made in advance by the members, he provided a breakdown of the costs of Heritage Festival Cultural Section and payments made to the members for services rendered to the SLCFA.

**7.0 Auditor's Report:** The Hon. Auditor, Mahinda Witharana, tabled his report (see attached). Mahinda pointed out that the treasurer did not receive all the cash donations made by members to the bereavement fund making it impossible to verify the amount collected and handed over to Appuhamy Family. He also wanted receipts issued to those who contributed rather than to those who collected funds. The fund collectors must hand over all the receipt books and collections to the treasurer for proper book keeping. He also recommended using the storage space at the SLCFA building rather than renting storage space and maximizing interest generated for SLCFA funds by determining the needed funds and investing any surplus funds at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Following Auditor's report Chris briefed the house on chronological sequence of events about collection of bereavement funds for the family of the late Nelson Appuhamy. Lal Weera volunteered and was authorized by the EC to collect the funds. The SLCFA issued an advanced cheque for \$2,500, which was delivered by Lal who refused to obtain a receipt from the Appuhamy Family. However, when Chris and Ransirimal visited this family they had no qualms about signing a receipt. To make matters more complicated, Lal failed to hand over part of the total collection to the Treasurer who then had no choice but to issue receipts only to those whose contributions were received by him. Lal handing over cash directly to the family without following established processes, led to a discrepancy between the money collected (according to Lal's pledge list) and handed over to the family by Lal Weera (SLCFA cheque for \$2500 and \$290 cash) and accounted for through the association in the bereavement fund. The association was able to recoup the \$2500 for the cheque that it advanced through the pledges.

A discussion on bereavement fund collection, distribution and beneficiaries ensued. The members felt that on EC should be involved in collecting contribution for the fund and all the members should follow the due procedures while taking part in Association activities. The President stated that the EC at the December meeting had already written a guideline to this effect, which was coming up for discussion at the AGM.

**8.0 Building Management Committee Report:** On behalf of the Building Management Committee, Lakshaman presented the BMC report. It summarized the building usage, rental income and maintenance.

**9.0 New Business:**

**9.1 Management of the hall by the BMC** (Suresh Fernando & Dilu Fernando)

Suresh and Dilu presented the following concerns about the outgoing BMC and Lakshaman on behalf of the BMC provided explanations as shown in italics within parentheses:

- a) The building was not made available on days requested, as indicated on an e-mail message that was received by Dilu. (*The BMC never denied requests for using the building when it was available; the e-mail message referred to was only a request by the BMC to Dilu to provide information about the dates when building was needed*).
- b) While the ABVA was given access to use of the computer the other members were denied use of audio equipment (*The computer is available for member use, especially for the youth; however, use of audio equipment by those who rent the building has not been allowed as a policy implemented due to problems that occurred in the past with this practice*).
- c) The BMC did not immediately respond to a complaint of an annoying buzz that occurred during a seniors' function and the SLCFA did not pay a paltry sum for a service contract for the alarm system (*The BMC members were unavailable due to personal commitments on the day of this request; even an alarm service company would not respond immediately to such complaints; the problem was associated with a hearing-aid of a senior and was not due to a faulty alarm system*).
- d) There were not enough supplies at the building during seniors' functions (*The supplies were there but the users were unaware of the storage of supplies*).
- e) The Food Service License has expired (*The facility passed the annual inspection at the correct date but there was a lapse between approval and receipt of the license*).
- f) The Seniors' Function Coordinator was denied of a key to access the building (*The BMC volunteered to open and close the building whenever required by the Coordinator; due to the past practice of uncontrolled issuance of keys that resulted in SLCFA incurring unwanted expense to replace locks, the number of keys issued is strictly controlled*).

**9.2 Resolutions a)** "The senior membership fees to be equivalent to single membership fee" (Lakshaman Samarasinghe and Upali Samarakoon) The house unanimously approved this resolution.

**b) Review of Membership Structure (EC)** Chris explained the need for this review that was circulated with the notice convening the AGM. The proposed changes deal with I) rights of persons over 18 years of age; II) rights of members under family category; and III) membership fees and renewal of membership on a pro-rated basis (see attached). The

membership fees will be increased as follows: Individual \$10 to \$15; Family without children \$20 to \$25; Family with children \$25 to \$30; Single Parent \$15 to \$20; Individual Student \$5 to \$10; Student Family \$10 to \$15; Affiliated Corporate Member \$25 to \$30; Seniors over 65 years \$0 to \$15; Life Membership individual \$100 to \$150; Life Membership Family \$200 to \$250. This need to increase membership fees is to cover the higher operating costs of the SLCFA. The house approved this review to be effective from 2006.

- 9.3 **Changes to the Policies and Procedures (EC)** These changes (see attached) deal with Sections 2.3 Signing out of Items: This was unanimously approved; 2.3.1 Payment to Members: This was unanimously approved with the replacement of word “approved” by “pre-approved”; and, 5. Bereavement Fund: the house unanimously approved the underlined amendment in the paragraph.

Another change that was proposed will cover the membership not wishing to dole out SLCFA funds to individuals. This was not available for approval and therefore Ransirimal will send a write up to the next EC about this for inclusion at the next general meeting.

- 9.4 **Importation of Goods from Sri Lanka for Heritage Festival (Lal Weera)** Lal explained to the house about the need to import goods from Sri Lanka to the value of \$3500 for use at the next Heritage Festival. He reiterated that his acceptance of the role of Cultural Section Coordinator is conditional of the house accepting this suggestion. Following a discussion on the past problems with importing goods, storage problems, conflict of interest and, previous claims of repeated use of items custom made for 2005 Heritage Festival display, the house rejected this motion by majority decision as follows: **In Favour 12 votes; Oppose 18 Votes; Abstain 1 Vote.**

- 9.5 **Simultaneous Occurrence of Two SLCFA-sponsored Functions (Savitri Senaratne)**: Savitri explained about past events that led to this situation and urged that SLCFA should refrain from scheduling two events to occur simultaneously, whenever feasible. After a short discussion, the house voted in favour of this suggestion with 4 members abstaining and none opposing.

- 9.6 **Donation of Medical Books**: Ransirimal briefed the house about a request received from the Medical Faculty of the University of Ruhuna for a supply of medical books. The estimated cost of this consignment is \$1264.30 including the cost of shipping. He appealed to the membership to donate towards this undertaking.

**10 Election of Office Bearers- 2006**

Chris invited P. A. Saram, the Returning Officer, to preside over the election of new office bearers. The house elected the following office bearers by acclamation:

**President: Suresh Fernando**

(Proposed by Nelum Ranasinghe; Seconded by Dilu Fernando)

**Vice-President: Dilu Fernando**

(Proposed by Nissanka Wijayanayake; Seconded by Nelum Ranasinghe)

**Secretary: Celia Daniel**

(Proposed by Dushanthi Fernando; Seconded by Therese Rustom)

**Treasurer: Liyana Jayathilake**

(Proposed by Chris Senaratne; Seconded by Nishani Jayathilake)

**Director of Membership and Welfare: Pamela Devanayagam**

(Proposed by Ramona Fernando; Seconded by Gothamica Wickremasekara)

**Director of Social and Recreational Activities: Ramona Fernando**

(Proposed by Gothamica Wickremasekara; Seconded by Nelum Ranasinghe)

The Returning Officer then invited Suresh to chair the meeting. Suresh thanked the membership for electing him and promised to do his best to ensure smooth functioning of the SLCFA.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Sunil Ranasinghe*