

SRI LANKA – CANADA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Mid-Year General Meeting held on August 14, 2005 at the SLCFA
Premises, 2913 – 66 Street, Edmonton, AB

1.0 Call to Order

The President, Chris Senaratne, called the meeting to order at 2.15 p.m. with 31 members in attendance.

Regrets: Jay Nagendran, (Vice-President) sent regrets on his inability to attend due to an urgent business matter.

At the request of Chris, Ransirimal Fernando (Director, Publicity) explained 3 handouts that were distributed to the attendees.

2.0 Approval of the Agenda

The following changes to the Agenda were suggested:

- Last item under New Business be changed from “Importing Items for Heritage Festival” to “Heritage Festival” (Lakshaman Samarasinghe);
- Membership fees for seniors (Lakshaman Samarasinghe);
- Trophies for Calgary – Edmonton sports encounter (Bandula Samaratunga);
and,
- Responsibilities for SLCFA Newsletter articles (Bandula Samaratunga).

The house agreed by acclamation to a motion to accept the amended agenda (proposed by Ransirimal Fernando and seconded by Shirani Samaratunga).

3.0 Approval of the Parts I & II of the Minutes of the 2005 Annual General Meeting

- **Part I** The house approved by acclamation the minutes with the following amendments (motion proposed by Mano Senaratne and seconded by Pushpa Liyanage):

Under Food Poisoning Section delete “The kitchen that we used should be condemned” (Savitri Senaratne); replace “Food Poisoning” with “Food Poisoning/Viral Infection” (Lal Weera).

- **Part II** The house approved by acclamation a motion to accept the minutes with the following amendment (proposed by Savitri Senaratne and seconded by Ransirimal Fernando):

The first sentence of Item a) under **Auditor’s Report** to read “Savitri asked whether anyone had any knowledge or record on the “goods” that were purchased from Sri Lanka for sale at the Heritage Festival.”

4.0 Business Arising Out of the Minutes

Action Items: The president reported as follows:

1 - Donation of \$1000: The current EC could neither find a record of approval of this donation by the previous EC nor a receipt by the recipient although a cheque with appropriate signatures and a logbook entry has been issued. Mano Senaratne (SLCFA president at the time the cheque was issued) recalled that the EC at the that time approved this payment at its final meeting held in January 2004; consequently, the minutes of that meeting may not have been passed onto the subsequent EC.

II Proposal to Post the Auditor's Report on the SLCFA Website: The persons who proposed and seconded this proposal consented to withdraw it; no action was taken;
III Bad Debt: A sum of \$746.00 that has been recurring since 2003 under accounts receivable was written off as a bad debt as directed by the house at the last AGM.

5.0 New Business

1. Update on Finances: The Treasurer, Lakshaman Samarasinghe, tabled a document with an update on the current financial status of the SLCFA as of August 1, 2005; Sinhala – Tamil New Year Project Statement; and a draft of the Heritage Festival Income/Expenditure Statement. In response to a query, Gothami Wickremasekera (Membership Director) clarified “Balance of attendance fee” that appeared under revenue section of the New Year Project statement. Responding to a question from Mano Senaratne, Lakshaman explained that \$4086 was transferred from the general account to the casino account because the AGLC disapproved the concerned expenses, which were incurred between January 2003 and May 2004. The house agreed to a motion directing the Treasurer to appeal this decision subject to finding written AGLC approval of some of these expenses (proposed by Ransirimal and seconded by Mano).

2. Additions to Policies and Guidelines: Lakshaman proposed and Helene Marathalingam seconded a motion that SLCFA should not provide financial assistance to individuals. The house agreed with this motion. However, the house agreed to Asoke Weerasinghe's suggestion to defer action on this motion pending the EC presenting guidelines on this issue to the next AGM.

3. Seniors Activities: Chris updated the house on the background to this item and correspondence on the subject circulated at the beginning of the meeting. A long discussion ensued on funding, food, and current coordinator resulting in a motion proposed by Asoke, amended by Ransirimal and seconded by Savitiri to provide seniors function with, up to \$15.00/person attending, of approved AGLC expenses for another year on a trial basis. The motion was carried with 29 members voting in favour, one against and one member abstaining.

Following further discussion in which accusations were leveled against the senior function coordinator, Asoke proposed and Albert Fernando seconded a motion to replace the current coordinator, Anil Fernando, with a suitable person. The motion was defeated in a secret ballot in which 16 voted against, 9 voted for and 4 members caste spoilt ballots. House then unanimously voted on a motion to destroy the ballot cards (proposed by P. A. Saram and seconded by Shirani Samaratunga).

4. Tsunami and Flood Relief Funds: Lakshaman informed the house that \$3649.89 is available under the Tsunami Fund and approximately \$800 is available under the Flood Relief Fund. Chris told the house that 2 requests (SOS Canada and PIN Foundation of Sri Lanka) for funds have been forwarded through the EC. Another request was received through Lal Weera shortly before the meeting commenced thus precluding the EC from reviewing it; this request to support a school in Sri Lanka originated from Chitra Rajapakse who personally volunteered to be accountable for proper use of the funds. Following a discussion and house acceptance of a suggestion by Ransirimal to remove SOS Canada from consideration, the house unanimously agreed to a motion proposed by

Ransirimal and seconded by Mano to equally support PIN Foundation and school rehabilitation projects.

5. Heritage Festival: Lakshaman, while reporting that the SLCFA made a profit with the Heritage Festival also raised issues on costs, labour, volunteerism that question the sustainability of this endeavour. Among related matters are reluctance of individuals to donate exhibits, funding import of items for display/sale, potential use of casino funds to cover expenses and lack of inventory/disappearance of items imported by the SLCFA for this festival.

Lal Weera has submitted an open letter to the membership offering his services to coordinate the cultural section of the SLCFA pavilion in 2006. He further stated that “it would be in the best interest of the association to import items from Sri Lanka to display and sell this coming year.” After discussing the contents of this letter the house unanimously approved the following two motions:

1) Asoke proposed and Savitiri seconded a motion to accept Lal’s offer to be the coordinator of the cultural section in 2006 and to direct the EC to have an itemized budget in writing from Lal before approving any expenses. The house rejected Lal’s request to use Association funds to import items from Sri Lanka to display and sell at the 2006 Heritage Festival; instead the SLCFA would encourage individuals to do so.

2) Lakshaman proposed and Savitri seconded a motion directing the EC to seek approval from the AGLC to cover some expenses related to the cultural section of the next Heritage Pavilion.

6. Membership Fees for Seniors: The consensus of the house was that membership fees for seniors are acceptable but the EC should produce a report on all the membership fees for discussion at the next AGM.

7. Trophies for the Calgary – Edmonton Sports Encounter: The house agreed to allocate funds to buy the necessary trophies as decided by the EC.

8. Responsibility for SLCFA Newsletter Articles: Bandula Samaratinga stated that erroneous facts were given on a letter to the editor that appeared on a recent issue of the SLCFA Newsletter, *Lanka Link*. The editor of the newsletter, Ransirimal, stated that a letter addressed to the members of the SLCFA was sent by the coordinator of the Sri Lankan Youth Community (Dinesha Weerakkody). This letter contained a balance sheet of a fund raising event and a note to thank the SLCFA members who helped out in this event. The letter was published “as is” to inform the readership. The SLCFA was not involved in organizing this event and was not responsible for the contents of this letter. Ransirimal also has received an e-mail message from the Treasurer of the ABVA on this issue. Ransirimal has responded to the ABVA to get Dinesha to send a letter to the editor stating the correct facts, which would receive the same attention in a subsequent edition of the newsletter.

6.0 Any Other Business: None

7.0 Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 5.15 p.m.

Sunil K. Ranasinghe, Secretary

Chris Senaratne, President