



Report
Staff Report
The Corporation of the City of Brampton
4/24/2024

Date: 2024-04-03

Subject: **Emancipation Day Memorial Artwork Design Concept**

Contact: Kelly Stahl, Director, Cultural Services

Report number: Community Services-2024-247

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Kelly Stahl, Director, Cultural Services to the Committee of Council Meeting of April 24, 2024, re: Emancipation Day Memorial Artwork Design Concept, be received; and
2. That Council approve the proposed Emancipation Day Memorial Artwork titled “AstroBlackJoy” by Kanisha Dabreo, in collaboration with Jason O’Brien, Jamera DaCota, and Komi Olaf as recommended by the Art Selection Committee; and
3. That Council delegate the authority to the Commissioner, Community Services to execute such agreement and/or other documents as may be required to implement Council’s resolutions and directions relating to the Emancipation Day Memorial Artwork including such terms and conditions as may be satisfactory to the Director, Cultural Services and in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor or designate.

OVERVIEW:

- In response to Council resolution C244-2021, staff initiated plans to establish a memorial artwork for Emancipation Day, with the City’s Cultural Services staff leading the project.
- The City engaged Astrosankofa Arts Initiatives, a non-profit with expertise in public art projects by Black artists, for consulting services, including the facilitation of the Call to Artists and the Art Selection Committee.
- The Art Selection Committee selected Kanisha Dabreo’s proposal for a multi-artist project, with Jason O’Brien, Jamera DaCota, and Komi Olaf collaborating.
- Staff are presenting the artwork as recommended by the Art Selection Committee for Council’s approval (Attachment 1).

- The Emancipation Day Memorial Artwork will require a total budget of \$50,000. Sufficient funding is available within the Cultural Services capital budget.

BACKGROUND:

At the July 7, 2021, Council meeting staff were directed to work with community stakeholders to establish a memorial artwork recognizing Emancipation Day (C244-2021).

As part of the 2023 budget, Council approved a \$50,000 capital project to establish a memorial artwork. Staff from the Cultural Services division and the City's Equity Office conducted a series of stakeholder meetings, including consultations with the Afro-Caribbean community, to gather the necessary background information for developing a project plan. This plan involved engaging Astrosankofa Arts Initiatives (Astrosankofa), a non-profit organization with expertise in developing culturally resonant public artwork by Black artists, to provide consulting services. These services included facilitating the Call to Artists and the adjudication process by the Art Selection Committee.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Call to Artists

On February 29, 2024, Astrosankofa, in collaboration with the City, issued a Call to Artists, inviting artists to submit qualifications and proposals meeting the following criteria:

- Conceptual relevance to Emancipation and the Black community.
- Suitability for installation at the designated memorial location within Emancipation Park (7599 Dixie Road, Brampton).
- Demonstrated structural soundness and viability.
- Design, fabrication and installation with the approved \$50,000 budget.
- Design for installation onto concrete footings and pads, with installation support provided by Parks Maintenance & Forestry.

The memorial artwork is expected to be installed in Emancipation Park in Q3 2024.

Selection of Artists/Artwork

The Art Selection Committee, facilitated by Astrosankofa, selected Brampton artist Kanisha Dabreo's proposal for the project. Additionally, three artists—Jason O'Brien, Jamera DaCota, and Komi Olaf—were chosen to collaborate with Dabreo on the artwork, co-creating a memorial piece recognizing the significance of Emancipation Day within the Afro-Caribbean community.

Art Selection Committee

The Art Selection Committee was formed based on community referrals, with a deliberate emphasis on achieving diversity among members of the Black community in Brampton in terms of profession, experience, and age group.

Community Consultations

Astrosankofa facilitated two community consultations on January 25 and March 21, 2024. On March 21, 2024, Dabreo, O'Brien, DaCota, and Olaf shared the proposed artwork as part of a community consultation organized by Astrosankofa at Knowledge Bookstore (177 Queen St W, Brampton). The artwork will incorporate representations of Canadian freedom fighters including Chloe Cooley, Sarah Pooley, and Dudley Laws, with additional suggestions sought from the community through this engagement opportunity. Following these discussions, Dabreo finalized the design, the concept of which is submitted for Council's approval (see Attachment 1).

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications – The Emancipation Day memorial artwork will require a total budget of \$50,000. Sufficient funding is available within the Cultural Services capital budget from Project #236860-002.

Legal Implications – Legal will review, provide advice on and approve as to form any Artist Agreement(s) related to this public art project.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

This report aligns with the Strategic Focus Area of Culture and Diversity, emphasizing cultural diversity, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and promoting artistic expression and production.

CONCLUSION:

As a result of Council resolution C244-2021, staff recommend proceeding with the Art Selection Committee's recommended artwork, "AstroBlackJoy," proposed by Kanisha Dabreo in collaboration with Jason O'Brien, Jamera DaCota, and Komi Olaf, as the memorial artwork recognizing Emancipation Day.

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 - Kanisha Dabreo's Design Proposal, "AstroBlackJoy" (subject to updates based on community input re: personages to be included)