

Council votes to purchase iconic statue for new municipal centre

By Mark Pavilons



The work of a King metal artist will welcome visitors to the new municipal centre.

Councillors voted to withdraw \$40,000 from the pool of funds from the annual mayor's golf tournament to purchase 'Steel Gorgeous', a life-size iron horse sculpture created by Kendall McCulloch.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini made the motion, supported by councillors recently. The mayor noted the Township has been interested in the sculpture for several years now, but the original asking price was too high. Negotiations with McCulloch arrived at the \$40,000 price tag.

The mayor loves this one-of-a-kind piece and Councillor Debbie Schaefer said she's delighted it will adorn the new complex.

'Steel Gorgeous' drew international attention when it became the welcoming centrepiece at the Caledon Equestrian Park for the 2015 Pan/Parapan Am Games. McCulloch and his creation have travelled extensively across Ontario ever since.

'It's a good place to have it,' McCulloch noted when he heard the news his sculpture has found a new home. While he's sad to see it go, he's happy that others will have a chance to see it on a regular basis.

The steel horse will rust if left to the elements and McCulloch said he's always kept it inside. He hopes it will sit inside the building, but did note that some steel sculptures take on an interesting new look when left outdoors.

McCulloch spent two years creating this showpiece that speaks to King's equine ties.

The self-taught artist took on the challenging task as a personal project.

Thousands of hours and feet of steel rebar (reinforcing bar) went into the life-size horse sculpture, which stands 16.2 hands high. On its stand, it's just under eight feet to the tips of the ears. The majestic beast weighs in at an estimated 3,000 pounds.

Every piece of rebar was formed and bent by hand. Normally, a sculpture of this size would use tin over a skeleton of sorts. For McCulloch, once he began the meticulous process of laying the rebar, he just kept going, continuing those natural, flowing lines that emerged. The half-inch rebar was laid tight, held together by solid and random welds.

The result is an accurate reproduction of a real animal. McCulloch took thousands of photographs and took measurements of real specimens to get the dimensions just right.

The horse caught the attention of the Town of Caledon, host to equestrian competitions during the Pan Am Games. Their parks and recreation staff fell in love with the piece and Kendall committed to lending it to them for several events prior to the 2015 Games.

He's quite modest and is really pleased that people find his creation beautiful and an accurate depiction of this animal.

This is his baby, something he's grown quite fond of over the years.

He is looking forward to doing more projects and will consider commission work. For more, visit kendallmcculloch.com or send him an email at kendallmcculloch23@gmail.com.