

Outdoor art display coming to Laskay

By Mark Pavilons

Laskay will get getting an outdoor public art installation, thanks to a decision by King council.

During the discussions on the hall's big move to the King Heritage and Cultural Centre, residents wanted to procure a piece of art for the hamlet. That would give the village a focal point and sense of community, in the absence of the hall.

Staff identified a small parcel of land located on the northeast corner of Weston Road and Old Church Road, as the best spot for the art. This area already serves as a gathering point for local residents.

Staff issued an open call for artists to design, create and install the art.

Six submissions were received and the evaluation panel, consisting of council, staff and representatives of ASK and Friends of Laskay Hall, chose "Memory's Gate," by A Culture of Small.

The project is estimated to cost \$53,000. Funding will come from the Laskay Park reconstruction budget, Township operating budget, Laskay Hall reserve and the mayor's golf tournament.

Memory's Gate is inspired by a poem written by King City Rev. Martin Jenkinson in 1953. It speaks to the theme of community and connectivity.

Memory's Gate is a weathered steel archway with original text of the poem laser-cut into it. This will visually frame a cantilevered wooden bench, perched on the large granite rock from Laskay Hall.

The steel gate is a representation of Memory's Gate, acknowledging the contributions of earlier generations who helped shape Laskay, and created its original infrastructure, such as the mills, general store, etc. Weathered steel was chosen due to its durability and minimal maintenance requirements.

The text on the gate will read:

Did they know their way of living

Would be seen 'yond His'try's door?

And those who never knew them

Would recall those days of yore?

The gate will be located perpendicular to Weston Road and be visible to cars travelling in both directions. It will also be visible from Old Church Road.

The bench will be composed of the large granite rock and a wooden seat. As the entryway to the community, it's an invitation to share a seat.

"The piece is intended to draw citizens onto the site, creating a defined entry into the community," noted the submission by A Culture of Small. "We feel this piece ... offers engagement for residents and visitors alike, provides sturdy, maintenance-free construction, with an eye to longevity and minimal opportunities for vandalism. Most importantly, we feel it reflects the unique character, heritage, and location of Laskay as a community."

A Culture of Small is an independent network of local and national affiliates, often promoting unconventional partnerships to reach new solutions for rural communities, all rooted in unique cultural heritage. "Small" facilitates the adaptive reuse of landscapes, communities and buildings in order to re-envision the community planning process. Small is focused on leveraging cultural heritage values and assets, in order to support liveable communities first.