

Town, Museum announce permanent legacy for National Indigenous Peoples? Day



National Indigenous Peoples Day was celebrated in Aurora last Wednesday with music, art, and the announcement of a permanent tribute to Canada's First Peoples.

Town Park was the scene of two commemorative events on June 21 when Mayor Tom Mrakas and Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley unveiled a new piece of Indigenous art by artist Donald Chretien.

Chretien's new piece complements his bumblebee installation, which was unveiled by Mayor Mrakas and Ms. Wheatley last year.

Following the ceremony, Dave Mowat, Chief of the Alderville First Nation, brought his trio to the band shell for an evening of music and education on the Summer Solstice to kick-off the Town's popular Concerts in the Park summer series.

While Chretien's works will stand proud in Town Park for the foreseeable future, a more permanent reminder of Canada's First Nations is now in the works.

On Friday, the Town and the Aurora Museum & Archives sent out a call for Indigenous artists to collaborate on a new permanent mural which will take pride of place inside the Museum's upcoming exhibition space at Aurora Town Square.

"Indigenous art in Canada is a visual representation of cultural knowledge and beliefs of Indigenous peoples," said Mayor Mrakas in a statement. "This art is persuasive, powerful and tells an important story of the history, traditions and values of Indigenous communities."

Added the Town: "Indigenous cultures have called this land home since time immemorial and the Town of Aurora was, and still is Indigenous land. The Town and Aurora Museum & Archives acknowledge the disparity between public displays of Indigenous histories and colonial histories, within our municipal borders and beyond. As we move forward, we are committed to broadening our understanding of the historical record and creating space for different forms of knowledge and storytelling."

More information on project guidelines can be found at auroramuseum.ca, along with the online application process.

The selected Indigenous artist will receive \$13,600 for the design and installation of the mural, which has a targeted completion date of December 2023.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter