

RESPONSE BY:TRIFON HAITAS, CANDIDATE FOR COUNCILLOR, WARD 1 RICHMOND HILL

COMMUNITY / PROMOTION / ACCESS:

What will you do to ensure the general public has greater access to experience and enjoy the arts in your municipality?

As Councillor of Ward 1 in Richmond Hill, I Trifon Haitas will fully support initiatives directed to the general public by our artisans and cultural craftspeople. Ensuring continued access to the arts community is essential to the promotion of the priceless work that is created by our talented and dedicated artisans and cultural craftspeople. For it is also through them that we enjoy the fruits of a civil society. We must therefore allow our artisans and craftspeople to teach, showcase and enrich every generation so that they may learn to raise the standard of their vocabulary and not only their voice. Our civil minded elders once stated that when the heavens touch the earth to nurture life, it is done so by the soft gentle rain and not by the loud crackling sound of thunder.

What is one small concrete example of supporting the arts that you can do on a monthly basis?

Promote artistic and cultural events in York Region to people in our community via social media and in person whilst attending public events in the GTA.

With many jobs being developed in media arts related fields, what are your plans to ensure talent stays in the region instead of moving to innovative hubs like Waterloo, Vancouver and Silicon Valley?

Strong determined advocacy is essential in ensuring our talent stays in our region. We need to invite as many media arts related industry leaders into our domain to ensure top quality jobs are made available to our vibrant arts and culture community.

How will you contribute to growth of the arts in the future for the next generation of artists?

I will stay firmly committed to supporting the essential nurturing and growth of our emerging artists and cultural craftspeople.

INTRINSIC VALUE:

What municipal arts and culture events/programming do you attend and support, and have you purchased work created by local artists?

I enjoy taking my family to children's artistic initiatives and cultural events in and around Richmond Hill. My wife Mary and I have two young children and strive for them to become aware, part of and supportive towards the arts and cultural community in and around our region.

We do enjoy purchasing works of art created by local artists and cultural craftspeople for our children and our home.

PLATFORM:

In your list of the ten top priorities of your platform, where would supporting the arts place on your list? Why there?

On my list of 10 top priorities supporting the arts and cultural craftspeople would earn a high ranking of fourth.

As Abraham (Harold) Maslow (1908-70) a U.S. psychologist and leader of the humanistic school of psychology once postulated a “hierarchy of needs” I strongly believe that once the basic needs of the community are met, we are free to explore our artistic abilities and strive towards the more noble of possibilities driven by our individual natural sense of motivation and duty.

Arts and culture is a barometer of the health of a community, town, or city. How will you profile/give a place to arts and culture in your municipal structure, strategic planning, marketing and reporting of achievements?

I believe that the quality of artists and cultural craftspeople is a strong indication of the health of a society. I will do everything within my power to ensure that our artisans and cultural craftspeople have a say and a place in our municipal structure, strategic planning, marketing and reporting of unique achievements.

What kind of municipal policy would you propose to encourage artists to be able to work and live in your municipality?

I would advocate for a policy that supports our artists financially based on their artistic strength. More ought to be invested towards nurturing the emerging artists and cultural craftspeople. Less financial assistance may be awarded towards the firmly established artisans and cultural craftspeople. This may ensure in allocating more funds to stimulate the growth of the emerging groups and or individuals.

SPACE:

How will you ensure that artists in your municipality receive affordable space to create and showcase their work?

Artists and cultural craftspeople are the eyes and ears of the body of every civil minded community. Our up and coming artisans along with all up and coming entrepreneurs need to receive tax breaks and affordable workspace to create and showcase their products.

Do you think artist studio space rentals should be added to the new Richmond Hill Public Library expansion and other similar community venues?

Yes I support the idea and believe that affordable studio space rentals ought to be provided in the new Richmond Hill Public Library expansion. My opinion is the same regarding similar community venues.

How do you envision the inclusion of local art in the public realm?

The public realm is like one human body and art is part and parcel of this body. So much of our human history is known because of the achievements gifted to us by our artisans. We have a better understanding of who we are as a species because our artist invested their time to depict their interpretations of the world around them and the life that existed within their lifetime. A community defines what it believes in and what it is through the art it bestows to future generations. The public domain would not be complete without the inclusion of this essential and priceless local artwork.

EDUCATION:

Where do you see arts education fitting into your electoral platform - in school programming, health programs and/or community programs?

It was the arts program that made it bearable for me to continue higher learning and I am positive the same holds true for many youth in our community. We need to ensure that the arts and cultural programs hold a strong position in every electoral platform, in school programming, health and community programs. As a child that immigrated to Canada at the age of six not knowing any English and having very few friends, I will always be indebted to and cherish the arts and crafts programs made available through public funding during the days of my early childhood in the community of Leslieville, Toronto. It was these very programs that enriched me as a child and nurtured me into becoming a proactive individual. This was a grant provided by our community to learn any given art or craftwork for free. All I would had to do, was gather the courage to walk to my local community centre or after school program and learn to make arts and crafts without having to worry that I (my parents) could not afford to pay for them. It was a precious gift bestowed to me and many other children by our community and it is programs such as these that build wholesome character in the minds of our youth. Therefore, I will always be beside our fellow artisans and cultural craftspeople to support them in their struggle to showcase their vision of the kind of world we live in.

FUNDING:

Do you believe that it's vital to have municipal granting programs to fund local artists and arts organizations to create and present work in your municipality? If so, how will you advocate for this funding?

It is critical that we provide municipal granting programs to fund local talent and the organizations that nurture and showcase their artwork. I would encourage our business class to partner up with our municipality to create funds that may be available to our local artisans.

There is a noticeable gap between arts spaces (studio, exhibition, performing, etc.) for emerging and professional artists in York Region, making it challenging for artists to stay in the area while growing their professions. What do you think the municipality's role is in funding spaces for emerging to mid-career artists?

The municipality loses its greatest treasure when it loses a member of the community to another municipality. Our municipalities need to do everything they can to ensure that our emerging and professional artists stay in York Region by providing lower tax incentives for those struggling to grow their professions in our community.