

QUESTIONS FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTORAL CANDIDATES:

How to Reply: Whether you respond to one question, a handful, or all, we appreciate your time and dedication to your community. The following questions are from artists and culture workers across York Region. Please insert your responses below the question(s) you choose to answer. Save the document and email it back to Samantha@yorkregionartscouncil.com AND Jessica@yorkregionartscouncil.com.

I really appreciate you reaching out to understand my views on the Arts. As an elected official, it would be my responsibility to stay informed by collaborating with the Region, the York Region Arts Council, the Aurora Cultural Centre and continue developing the Town Cultural Master plan to ensure we are doing the best we can to continue growing, engaging and developing artists in our community.

Some questions were similar in nature and answered accordingly.

Thank you for all you do with the York Region Arts Council and for your consideration.

COMMUNITY / PROMOTION / ACCESS:

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

I support the new Library Square in Aurora and believe this will be a great opportunity to be the cultural hub of our town that can showcase local artists.

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

I moderate the Town Park Facebook Page which promotes events including Concerts In The Park, Mosely Street Music, the Cultural Centre and the Farmer's Market.

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?

Aurora needs to attract new businesses. New graduates are attracted to areas with opportunity and Aurora needs a strategy to attract new business with meaningful jobs in these fields. With Niagara College on the horizon and the new Library Square project in the works there is opportunity. Other initiatives include to:

- Implement an Annual Cultural Summit to attract business participation and community leadership
- Consider business sponsorship training programs, designed to spark new business sponsorship of arts and culture.

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

I would look at ways to acquire grants to help funding. Advocate for implementation of the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan and stay committed to our Cultural Master Plan and its' guiding principles, as seen below;

♣ Collaboration – adopt a collaborative approach to cultural development supported by sustained communication and collaboration between the Municipality and cultural groups, the public and voluntary sectors and other levels of government

- ♣ Integrated Planning – ensure cultural resources and opportunities are considered in all areas of planning and decision-making in the Municipality
- ♣ Accessibility – provide cultural opportunities, resources and activities that are accessible to resident of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, and economic circumstances and across all parts of the community
- ♣ Fiscal Responsibility – make the most efficient and effective use of the Municipality's resources ensuring accountability and value for money
- ♣ Innovation – strive for continuous innovation in cultural planning and development involving all stakeholders

INTRINSIC VALUE:

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

I have been attending the Mosley Street Music Concerts, local theatre shows, Doors Open and attend the farmers market each week. I always look at ways to support our local artists, but can't be at all the wonderful events. Artwork adorns our walls created from a local St Andrew's alumni artist. I also have purchased homemade items from our local Farmers Market Artisans and am a big believer in supporting our own economy in Aurora.

PLATFORM:

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

It tough to put an arbitrary number on the Arts. I support the Arts whole heartedly and Library Square is definitely something I want to see move forward quickly. Showcasing our culture and character, attracting local business, and revitalization of the downtown core are important to me.

Arts and culture are 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 would advocate for implementation of the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan and stay committed to our Cultural Master Plan and its' guiding principles.

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

- Look at more ways to showcase public art
- Look at ways to acquire grants, partnerships and tourism
- Reach out to organisations for advice such as, Toronto Artscape who has experience developing and managing secure, sustainable spaces for artists and cultural organizations. These spaces enable artists to live, work and thrive in the community, while also contributing to the cultural, social and economic enrichment of our neighbourhoods.

SPACE:

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

I believe that public facilities can and should be available to artist for showcasing their work. Let's explore opportunities to share space with existing artists/artisans and new creative spaces in empty or underutilized buildings, such as; schools, churches or commercial spaces.

Reach out to organisations for advice such as, Toronto Artscape who has experience developing and managing secure, sustainable spaces for artists and cultural organizations. These spaces enable artists to live, work and thrive in the community, while also contributing to the cultural, social and economic enrichment of our neighbourhoods.

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

I would like to see local artist supported with both permanent and temporary exhibits. With the new Library Square and addition to the Cultural Centre coming, it could present an opportunity for permanent art. Our Town Park presents a great space for temporary outdoor art displays, and I think it would be great to have theatre in the park during the summer months. I would refer to the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan and Cultural plan for guidance, growth, awareness and continued development.

EDUCATION:

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

Aurora provides plenty of programs run through the Town and offers a lot of variety for all ages. However, I am committed to looking at more ways to engage the community by partnering with schools, the Region and Cultural groups such as, the York Regional Council and Aurora Cultural Centre.

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?

I would like to ensure that public facilities are available for the presentation of art works.

I would look at ways to acquire grants to help funding. Advocate for implementation of the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan and stay committed to our Cultural Master Plan and its' guiding principles:

- ♣ Collaboration – adopt a collaborative approach to cultural development supported by sustained communication and collaboration between the Municipality and cultural groups, the public and voluntary sectors and other levels of government

- ♣ Integrated Planning – ensure cultural resources and opportunities are considered in all areas of planning and decision-making in the Municipality
- ♣ Accessibility – provide cultural opportunities, resources and activities that are accessible to resident of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, and economic circumstances and across all parts of the community
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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?

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Rachel Gilliland