

**RESPONSE BY: JASON CHERNIAK, REGIONAL COUNCILLOR CANDIDATE,  
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?*

I will support the continuation of existing regional and town programs and grants that support the arts. I will ask Town staff to include art installations and/or performances at large public events like Rib Fest and Tastes of the Hill. I will also try to get the Town of Richmond Hill to stop charging arts groups for rent in buildings like the Burr House and the Mill Pond Gallery.

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

I will continue to attend local arts events. As a councillor I will try to do this at least once a month and support such events on social media.

*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?*

I would support the creation of a mixed-use arts and cultural hub in York Region. I know that there is some research being put into this issue and once some options are available, I will recommend that Regional and Town staff work to support the proposal and help bring it into existence.

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

I believe that my above answers will do this. I will also consider other good ideas that I hear from local arts group and municipal staff.

**INTRINSIC VALUE:**

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

I am already a board member of Shadowpath Theatre Productions and I have sponsored its events about once a year since 2015. I attend many of the organization's events. I have also supported High Notes Avante and Portraits of Giving. I visit the McMichael and Varley art galleries on occasion (my wife used to work at the Varley). I have attended the Caribbean North musical event at the Centre for Performing Arts and the Newmarket Jazz Fest a couple of times.

**PLATFORM:**

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

You will see on my website that I have 6 sub-pages for my platform. I see the arts fitting into the “Community Building” section. I don’t believe it is necessary to pick an order for these 6 topics. I do believe that as a person who has always been busy and able to accomplish a lot, I don’t need to pick only 10 items that I will work on over a four-year period.

*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’m already listing Shadowpath on most of my printed material being distributed around Richmond Hill. I see arts as part of the larger whole and the best way to give it a profile is to integrate it with other issues. We don’t only need separate “arts events” for people to attend. We also need to include the arts in more general events such as Rib Fest and Tastes of the Hill.

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

I think a mixed-use arts hub would help. I also support the existing artist in residence programs. If it is not already, the Town and Region should be buying local art for its community centres and buildings.

#### **SPACE:**

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

I would support the creation of a mixed-use arts and cultural hub in York Region. I know that there is some research being put into this issue and once some options are available, I will recommend that Regional and Town staff work to support the proposal and help bring it into existence.

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

If there is demand/need, then yes. My instinct is that rooms could be included that could be used for studio space or community meetings – without limiting them to one or the other – but I would need to know more before being sure.

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

I would include local art installations and performances at community events such as Rib Fest and Tastes of the Hill. If the Town and Region are not already buying local art for community centres and offices, then they should be. There should also be revolving installations.

#### **EDUCATION:**

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

Our community centres already provide theatre and painting programs. These should continue and be available to all ages.

**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?*

Yes. I know this funding already exists in Richmond Hill and York Region. I would need to know more from staff about the amount of funds requested versus the amount paid out before I can comment further. I would also want to know whether there are good programs that our granting committees want to support, but cannot afford to support.

*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?*

This question is extremely broad. I think the answers I've given above, when put together, answer this one.