

RESPONSE BY:

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COMMUNITY / PROMOTION / ACCESS:

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

The City of Markham currently allocates just \$1 per resident for arts programming annually. This seems incredibly low compared to other jurisdictions. I will fight to raise arts spending in Markham.

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

I look forward to involving the Varley Art Gallery in the commercial life of Main Street Unionville through active involvement in the UBIA and the Unionville Historic Community Vision Committee.

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?

Markham desperately needs affordable housing. I look forward to working with staff, developers and my fellow councillors to initiate the building of affordable rental housing in Markham using inclusionary zoning, and development charge rebates and deferrals, and by leveraging the City's own property inventory.

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

I look forward to using my influence, leadership skills and voting power to ensure that the arts receive appropriate attention and funding through the City of Markham and in partnership with other levels of government and philanthropic organisations.

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 deeply involved in the Unionville Festival and am currently the Past Chair. In recent years we have reached out to local artists and artisans (through MAC and the YRAC) to join us as vendors at a very affordable cost. We have also worked to include entertainment programming

in partnership with MAC and the Flato Markham Theatre. I regularly visit the Varley Gallery and performances at the Flato Markham Theatre. And yes, I do own a number of works by local visual artists. They stand up well alongside art collected from many other parts of the world.

PLATFORM:

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

Support for the arts would be among my priorities. I would hesitate to put any of my priorities in any particular order in so far as action will depend heavily on the priorities of others.

I am committed to developing healthy vibrant family-friendly communities. The arts are an essential part of that formula.

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 will be reporting to my residents regularly. A regular arts update can be part of that process. I will also ensure that all new City initiatives are reviewed through their impact on the arts and cultural life – in the same way as the City reviews new projects relative to environmental impacts, accessibility etc.

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

I am committed to improving accessibility to affordable housing – affordable for artists, as well as others in the community. Please see my comments above regarding financial tools at the City's disposal.

I also wonder whether there might be a role for an organisation like Artscape in Markham, to help develop living and working spaces for artists. I would be happy to be involved in approaching that organisation.

SPACE:

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

I can think of at least three under-utilised facilities in and around Unionville that could be repurposed as artists' working space. As noted above, perhaps Artscape would be interested in Markham.

What would it take for a cultural centre to be created in Markham - an affordable space for creating, collaborating and presenting visual and performing arts?

I understand that there are plans for a new theatre in Markham Centre. Perhaps the vision for this should be expanded somewhat. However, it is important to know that we have an excellent, if under-promoted, art gallery (the Varley) and exhibition space (McKay House) in Unionville. We also have spaces in our libraries and community centres that might be devoted to the arts. We should begin with an inventory of current City facilities and work from there.

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

As we build new housing and commercial developments I look forward to more public art using Section 37 funding. Also, when streetscapes are revitalised (i.e. Main Street Unionville). public art should be part of the planning from the earliest stages.

EDUCATION:

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

I support the City's efforts to offer arts programs for all ages through our community centres, libraries and other public facilities. This should include partnerships with the school boards, York University and Seneca College.

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?

As noted above, I support improved funding for the arts. However, we do need to remember that the City's major tax source for on-going operations is property taxes, which are regressive. Apart from its own funding, the City can help advocate for arts funding from other levels of government that have access to income tax revenue and from philanthropic organisations.

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?

As noted above, the City should undertake an inventory of underutilised spaces and buildings across the City. I can think of at least 3 empty facilities in and around Unionville, all owned by public or private organisations that would be open to the notion of devoting them to arts uses.

Will you implement a municipal budget for arts-based funding for artists living and working in Markham? If so, how? If not, why not?

I would tend to want to focus efforts on improving access to the arts (doing and viewing) for the general public, as well as finding ways of using City facilities for the arts. Direct subsidies for artists are fundamentally income transfers. They would be best funded by our provincial or federal governments with access to income tax revenue. Markham relies primarily on regressive property taxes as its main on-going revenue source. Property taxes are not an ideal source of income subsidies.