

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?

I know that all Richmond Hill residents would like to be able to participate in cultural/art experiences that are more accessible, affordable and inclusive and that better reflect our community's diversity.

We need to be more accessible, with central, barrier-free welcoming places to offer arts and culture programs, exchange ideas and share resources.

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

We need better tools to help Richmond Hill residents find and collaborate with artists, while artists need not just an invitation but a chance to engage with our diverse neighbourhoods. Continuing to open up public spaces and market places year-round in every area of Richmond Hill, will help promote interaction amongst residents and artists.

When elected Mayor of Richmond Hill, I would like to engage with the arts community by hosting a FREE "Art Evening With The Mayor", showcasing one type of art each quarter of the year, to show my support, with a hands-on approach.

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?

We could use Toronto's partnership with Sidewalk Labs as a starting point but with a media arts related field tilt to it.

Let's create an infrastructure so that private enterprise, like Sidewalk, feels welcomed to set up shop right here in Richmond Hill.

We should establish a community that improves the quality of life for Richmond Hill residents, artists, workers, and visitors.

This will create a destination for people, companies, start-ups, and local artists.

I will look at incentives, to encourage growth & destinations for companies to film in our town. Richmond Hill has excellent locations, such as old Richmond Hill, Lake Wilcox, the Mill pond area and many more.

My goal will be to make Richmond Hill a hub for the artistic and cultural industry.

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

I would ensure a stable source of funding is made available to arts-based and culture groups. Let's mobilize the skills and power of our local artists and culture groups to offset the ugly impact of construction for example, by turning construction zones into art installation projects, to improve local artists' public profiles and beautify our Town.

Let's turn disrupted neighborhoods into art and culture destinations. This could include murals, performances in restaurants and parks.

INTRINSIC VALUE:

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

Since moving to Richmond Hill seventeen years ago, I have enjoyed many performances at the Curtain Club and Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. I attend the Taste of the Hill with my family every year and also enjoy many evenings with them at Mill Pond, listening to the wonderful music.

PLATFORM:

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

My platform is extensive. From introducing term limits, to renewal and accountability, to keeping property taxes at or below the rate of inflation, yet my commitment to supporting the arts is high.

My goal is to break down silos and foster collaboration across cultural and arts sectors business and other layers of government, to help strengthen our arts sector and, in turn, enhance creative and economic benefits for Richmond Hill.

In the end though, sustained, reliable funding is essential to artists, cultural organizations and infrastructure.

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?

A review of our municipal arts marketing plans and corroboration with arts-based groups can provide insight and perspective about trends and issues, so that we can consider arts planning, marketing and development.

Once we have a clear vision of what we want, we can start setting our goals, developing a marketing strategy, etc. It's important though, to ensure we are on the right track. We must measure our progress along the way.

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

Artists have often been the victims when it comes to finding space. Access to culture can both improve neighborhoods and property values, but yet create a situation where artists becomes squeezed out.

In Hong Kong for example, to facilitate and support local art, the city worked with a landlord and converted a former factory into studio spaces for artists.

The city helped fund the factory construction and was able to get the blessing of the owner into providing below-market rent.

We can't rely on outdated thinking anymore. We must be bold, with a vision towards creating a Richmond Hill where arts and artists are fully supported.

SPACE:

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

The Board of Trade, has office space in a municipal building. Why not free up separate space for cultural and community groups to use as an artist or arts hub. In addition, we can look to and encourage "backpacker" type housing or work space for travelling artists.

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

I'm very open minded and would support this approach.

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

The relevance of public art in public spaces is so very important. For example, in the context of building new infrastructure, we might look at the inclusion of local art, required by law. For residents and visitors, public art has the power to reinforce a sense of community pride. With so much development happening in our region, we can help focus on areas where there may have been no previous permanent inclusion of art.

EDUCATION:

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

The Arts are just as important as math, physical education, spelling, and geography. Young people must be introduced to and educated in the arts. Everyone can find benefits by being part of community groups, learning new and exciting forms of art and dance. My commitment to supporting arts is very strong. The Town offers a wide variety of arts courses in our Community Centres but we should look at the needs and wants of the residents, to ensure that we are providing the correct type of education (culture-specific, inclusive). We should also investigate opening up other public spaces to host art classes.

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 do support granting programming and will advocate for this funding to be including in our budget process.

I will also advocate to the other levels of government for continued and sustainable funding for arts and culture based groups in Richmond Hill.

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?

First, let's invest in cultural infrastructure, such as artist live/work spaces and performance venues. We can support the creation of artist-run centres and institutions that keep and lure artists in from other jurisdictions.

Secondly, we can connect our arts population with complementary industries to encourage collaboration between not for profits and business sectors, thereby increasing paid opportunities for artists.

Finally, we need to expand our creative sectors and re-evaluate how public money is spent on the arts: major one-off events generate less cultural / economic development than smaller grants to local organizations.