

From: Robyn Stevan  
Sent: Sun 3/24/2019 1:18 PM  
To: Clerks Richmondhill  
Subject: re: Territorial Acknowledgement before meetings

Dear Members of the Richmond Hill Town Council,

I understand that the Council is considering opening meetings with a Territorial Acknowledgement. As an educator in Richmond Hill at the Toronto Waldorf School, I am heartened that this matter is being taken seriously, and that Richmond Hill is joining countless other organizations around the country to bring land acknowledgements as a daily practice.

I formerly worked for the TDSB, as well as for the downtown Waldorf school; I am also part of the theatre community across Toronto, being a founding member of Soulpepper Theatre Company. Before every school day, and before every theatre performance all across Toronto, land acknowledgements are being made. Honestly, it is the least we can do.

Bringing land acknowledgements into our consciousness is a starting point. Recognizing the former caretakers of this land--the peoples who inhabited this land for thousands of years before settlers arrived--is an important acknowledgement of lineage. Acknowledging the land is also a reminder that the former residents of this land made countless peaceful treaties with our governing bodies in good faith. Sadly, the alarming majority of these treaties were broken, deliberately misleading or ignored. It is important for us now to begin the process of truth and reconciliation. There is still a long road ahead of us.

Opening meetings, gatherings and events with a territorial acknowledgement offers an opportunity for all of us to take a moment to reflect and remember. Hearing these acknowledgements has certainly raised my own consciousness of where I live, work and raise my family. While these acknowledgements will not solve all the problems we face, they hopefully will help remind us that there is work yet to be done to come into right relations with the people whose ancestors were the former caretakers of this land. This is the least we can do for those who walked before us, and for the youth and future generations coming after us, to send a message that it is never too late to right the many wrongs of the past.

Thank you for the work you are doing, and for bringing this matter to your council meeting.  
Sincerely,

Robyn Stevan  
High School English/Drama Teacher  
Toronto Waldorf School