

From: Shalini Konanur (SALCO)
Sent: March-07-19 2:36 PM
To: Office Mayor; Joe DiPaola; Carmine Perrelli; Greg Beros; Tom Muench; Castro Liu; David West; Karen Cilevitz; Godwin Chan
Subject: Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

Hello,

I am writing today on the upcoming vote at Council on adding an Indigenous Acknowledgement at the beginning of council meetings. I understand that the motion on this matter has been deferred to March 25, 2019.

I am a long-time resident of Richmond Hill (over 30 years) and I work in the field of race equity as the Executive Director and a Social Justice / Human Rights Lawyer at the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario. Through my work, I have had several opportunities to work in solidarity with Indigenous communities across Canada to operationalize the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee into meaningful action. I was surprised that council was not already doing a land acknowledgement. This has been standard practice in almost all of the municipal, provincial, and federal governments spaces that I have worked in.

I have growing concern about racism in York Region (recently the anti-immigrant rally in Markham, and growing anti-Muslim commentary in my children's school and in other public spaces). The deep-seated racism felt by Indigenous communities is not tolerable. At a very minimum, I would encourage all of you to vote unanimously to adopt a land acknowledgement at the beginning of your meetings. We need our leaders in York Region to continue to step up and be an example of our human rights / Charter values.

There are several Indigenous communities in Richmond Hill that may support you if you are having trouble with language / wording.

I hope that you will consider my email when you vote on this very important issue.

Regards,
Shalini

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