

From: Rhonny Russman
Sent: Mon 3/25/2019 11:43 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Cc: Karen Cilevitz
Subject: Land Acknowledgement

The motion put forth to have indigenous land acknowledgement read at the beginning of your counsel meetings at first made me proud to live here in Richmond Hill. However, it was followed with great disappointment to have also read that there were actually counsellors who did not immediately agree to this and chose to put off this decision. In fact, I was horrified to read some of the objections mentioned. How can we even group immigrants (of which many of us all are and most of us have descended from) in the same category as the First Nations people who inhabited this land long before we did? The following is a summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:

*Cultural Genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. **Land is seized**, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual Leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. **In the dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things.***

Really, how hard is it to recognize the land that we now live on? It is the very least that we can do to acknowledge and take responsibility for our participation as a country in what has previously occurred. I urge all of you who do not believe that this is an important matter to reconsider.

Respectfully submitted,
Rhonny Russman
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