

July 4, 2022

David West, Mayor  
Councillors of the City of Richmond Hill  
225 East Beaver Creek Rd.  
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3P4

Dear Mayor West and Councillors:

Re: Agenda Item: Other Business  
Motion 14.1 Member Motion - Land Acknowledgement -  
(Deferred from the June 22, 2022 Council meeting)

Further to my petition to Council dated June 22, 2022, and with all due respect to Council and the residents of the City Richmond Hill, I urge City Council to accept the recommendations made by the Interim City Manager, Darlene Joslin, in her memorandum to the Mayor and Members of Council of the 27th, inst., with a caveat that Council will be in receipt of the final version on or before June 21, 2023, National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Ms. Joslin's memo appropriately recognizes that Land Acknowledgements are sensitive documents. Since they serve to formalize collective recognition of historical fact they should never be presented haphazardly or without careful consideration. By recognizing the dearth of staff expertise in Indigenous matters and opting to engage a well-recognized consultant, Ms. Joslin has executed her mandate by retaining *Shared Path Consultation Initiative* in order to ensure that the scope, design, and text of our Land Acknowledgement meet the needs of Richmond Hill both today and in the future.

As noted in my previous letter, the Ontario organization HIP (Honoring Indigenous Peoples) states *inter alia*:

*"A land acknowledgement is a single act of reconciliation... It is important to note that land acknowledgements are not new and have been around for hundreds of years before the arrival of Europeans.*

...

*Land statements are about acknowledging, establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Land acknowledgements should come from the heart and by expressing a statement before beginning our events, work and decision making, we are reminded of our responsibilities... to each other, to the land, to our values and to future generations....*

***Copying or quickly composing a statement, risks offending the very Indigenous Peoples you are intending to recognize and completely misses the point of what reconciliation is about.”***

Although longer than preferred, the timeline charted in Ms. Joslin’s memo will allow for the creation of a Land Acknowledgement that preserves both City legitimacy and First Nation integrity.

To that end, the currently proposed Land Acknowledgement contained in Motion 14.1 (Deferred from June 22, 2022) is still unacceptable and disingenuous as written. It should not be adopted for use by the City of Richmond Hill.

In closing, I implore you to allow Ms. Joslin the opportunity complete the task City staff were initially assigned and endorse her appointment of *Shared Path Consultation Initiative* to help craft an Acknowledgement that truthfully and accurately addresses the history of this region where we gather and live, together.

With thanks,

Sharon Chisholm

81 Shaftsbury Avenue  
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 0P9