

# A Better Richmond Hill

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July 25, 2022

To the Mayor and Councillors of Richmond Hill,

This letter is written on behalf of the members of A Better Richmond Hill, to express our support and encouragement for you to respond with strength and character to the recent lawsuit of Regional and Local Councillor Perrelli ("RC Perrelli") against the City of Richmond Hill, filed on July 5, 2022.

This is the fourth lawsuit from RC Perrelli against the City that ABRH can find. This time he is attempting to avoid repayment of the \$139,000 he owes taxpayers for his July 2021 green/blue bin event which he had previously promised to pay for through sponsorships and about which he publicly committed that *"no taxpayers' dollars will be spent for this event."* In his lawsuit, RC Perrelli specifically names several Richmond Hill employees, including the city solicitor, city clerk, former city manager and head of human resources.

It appears to us residents of Richmond Hill that through this lawsuit RC Perrelli is abusing our legal system to try to exert pressure and intimidate the members of our Council for simply trying to contain his misrepresentations and bad behaviour. The recent Integrity Commissioner's report of June 30, 2022, documents 11 separate complaints of intimidation and harassment by RC Perrelli against staff, of which several were found to be valid by the Commissioner (and we consider many others also likely to be valid but unfortunately could not be proven sufficiently). It is not unusual for RC Perrelli to try to intimidate Council after being censored for his deportment - in addition to the current lawsuit against Council for trying to collect on his misrepresented blue-bin event, as described above, he previously filed suit against the City during his 2010-2014 term after Council put in place a by-law to contain RC Perrelli's "willful misrepresentation of City decisions" to residents.

Each time RC Perrelli files a lawsuit, or one is filed against him, Richmond Hill taxpayers incur a substantial cost. The City has also incurred substantial costs to investigate each Integrity Commission complaint raised against him, comprising multiple complaints over the past year. In addition to the direct costs of RC Perrelli's actions to taxpayers, one must consider the lost productivity and emotional turmoil of Richmond Hill personnel who have had to go into therapy, taken leaves of absence or even resigned due to what previous City Manager, Mary-Anne Dempster, called his "toxic workplace harassment". Indeed, after her own trauma, Ms. Dempster is now suing the City of Richmond Hill for \$2M for failing to protect her from his actions. As well, his constant disruptions of council meetings and his campaign against Councillor Cilevitz for the minor offense of neglecting to inform him of a few public meetings has substantially weakened our municipal government when we most needed strength and cooperation during the extended illness of former Mayor Barrow.

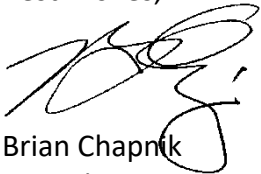
The Richmond Hill Code of Conduct requires that a Member of Council “affirm the respect and integrity in the democratic decision-making processes of Council.” The Code also requires that no Member shall “undertake any act of reprisal or threaten reprisal against a complainant or any other person for providing relevant information to the Integrity Commissioner or any other person”. In filing this lawsuit, RC Perrelli refuses to affirm the democratic will of Council to apply discipline where it is rightly due and also uses the suit as a platform to attack the character of those who complained about him to the Integrity Commissioner, thereby breaching the Code of Conduct again and again. Unfortunately, what is just is not necessarily what is legal, and RC Perrelli is entitled to his legal remedies, despite what the cost to the taxpayers may be. In RC Perrelli’s lawsuit, he repeatedly accuses Council of exhibiting “bad faith”; in fact, it is RC Perrelli who personifies “bad faith”, consistently acting in ways that are to the detriment of the people of Richmond Hill who elected him to office.

Through his repeated infractions of the Richmond Hill Code of Conduct, and his actions and deportment as described above, RC Perrelli reflects poorly on the citizens of Richmond Hill. This is the main reason that Richmond Hill is currently at the bottom of the barrel on the Municipal Democracy Index. If there were any mechanism available to remove him from office immediately, we would highly recommend it. Meanwhile, we implore Council to stand firm in their resolve to see justice in these matters, and not to be intimidated by RC Perrelli’s use of our legal system to heap yet more abuse on those who have already suffered at his hands.

The election is coming, and the people of this City are watching, and hoping for A Better Richmond Hill.

Thank you for your efforts.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Chapnik', written over a circular stamp or mark.

Brian Chapnik  
Vice-Chair, A Better Richmond Hill

Cc: RHURG