

From: S Lee

Sent: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 10:03 AM

To: Clerks Richmondhill clerks@richmondhill.ca

Subject: Comment on SRCS.25.11, Member of Council Events

Dear Mayor and Members of Committee,

After reviewing SRCS.25.11 and the proposed Council Member Event and Fundraising Policy, I cannot support the recommendation to eliminate councillor-led events beginning January 1, 2027. While I understand the concerns raised, the proposed solution removes a longstanding and valuable form of ward level engagement instead of addressing the specific challenges outlined in the staff report.

The current Member of Council Events Policy, approved May 5, 2021, permits councillors to hold two one day events or one two day event in most years, and one one day event in an election year. However, the policy has been applied inconsistently. Some councillors have held only one event, while others have effectively run multiple events by scheduling several dates under the same event name or by categorizing additional activities as smaller or informal events. This inconsistent interpretation has created staff workload pressures and confusion around enforcement. The issue is the inconsistent application of the existing rules, not the existence of councillor led events themselves.

SRCS.25.11 proposes eliminating councillor-led events and replacing them with City-led programming. Recommendation (d) states:

“That the new Festivals and Events Strategy include a recommendation for the phase in of a minimum of four new City Events using existing staff resources.”

Richmond Hill has six wards. The staff report does not state that the City intends or is able to provide six separate ward level events to replace the current councillor led model. What the report does state is:

“...it will not be possible to undertake additional City event initiatives without additional staff resources...”

This means the proposed minimum of four City events is based on current staffing levels but does not guarantee equitable ward coverage. As a result, under the proposed structure, residents in two wards will likely have no ward level programming, which reduces local access to meaningful engagement opportunities.

Councillor led events are funded entirely through community sponsorship, not through the City budget. These events provide neighbourhood level engagement where residents can meet their councillor directly, raise local concerns, and participate in activities that reflect the character of their community. Councillors generally understand the needs and priorities of their own wards better than a centralized City led model can achieve.

A more balanced and effective approach would be to:

1. Permit each councillor to hold one event per year,
2. Adopt a clear definition of what constitutes an event, for example, a single one day gathering on one date, at one location, with one defined purpose,
3. Clearly distinguish Councillor Led Events from issue driven ward meetings. When concerns arise that affect the ward, such as safety, development, traffic, or other neighbourhood issues, a meeting to address these matters is part of a councillor's normal responsibilities and should not be considered or counted as a Councillor Led Event,
4. Close the loophole that allows multiple dates under the same event name, and
5. Maintain transparency through the existing event account structure while allowing City led events to expand without removing ward level engagement.

This approach ensures fairness, simplifies the system, reduces confusion, eliminates loopholes, manages staff workload, and preserves important opportunities for residents in every ward to connect with their councillor.

Residents expect practical solutions. They expect us to stop red tape and simplify processes so that engagement is meaningful and accessible.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reject the recommendation to eliminate councillor-led events and instead strengthen enforcement and consistency within a simplified and clearly defined policy framework.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sigmund Lee

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