

From: S Lee

Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2026 8:48 AM

To: Clerks Richmondhill clerks@richmondhill.ca

Subject: Fwd: September 9 Lauremont School Motion - Employment Land and Community Access

Mayor West and Members of Council,

I am writing regarding the September 9 Committee of the Whole motion concerning the proposed redesignation of 500 Elgin Mills Road East and 93 Edward Avenue for Lauremont School and an accessory outdoor sports field.

I understand the rationale for considering a site-specific accommodation. Lauremont School was established at its current location before recent provincial changes restricted institutional uses within Employment Areas, and the proposed field could benefit both students and the wider community.

However, the motion begins by recognizing that protecting Richmond Hill's employment-land supply is critical to the City's economic sustainability. It then proposes removing approximately 2.7 hectares, or 6.67 acres, from the Employment Area designation.

Given Richmond Hill's limited remaining employment land, I respectfully ask Council to consider:

- How much employment land does Richmond Hill presently have available for future businesses and job creation?
- How much employment capacity would be lost through this redesignation?
- Has the City assessed the cumulative effect of this and other employment-land conversions?
- How would the City replace or compensate for the employment land being removed?
- Could equivalent employment land be protected or designated elsewhere?
- Is the property realistically capable of supporting future employment uses?
- Why must both entire properties be redesignated rather than granting a narrowly defined, site-specific permission?
- What restrictions would prevent a future owner from seeking residential or other unrelated non-employment uses?
- Could the land be required to return to an Employment Area designation if the private-school use ends?
- What precedent could this decision establish for other institutional or non-employment uses seeking similar treatment?

These questions are particularly important because Richmond Hill needs a strong commercial and employment assessment base. Continuing to remove employment land may increase the City's dependence on residential property taxes while reducing opportunities for residents to work closer to home.

The motion also refers to making the proposed sports field available for community use. Recent reports concerning substantial York Region District School Board rental-fee

increases demonstrate that permission to rent a facility does not necessarily make it meaningfully accessible. Community organizations are already cancelling programs and surrendering permits because they cannot afford the new fees.

Article:

<https://www.newmarkettoday.ca/local-news/advocate-calls-for-intervention-as-york-region-school-rental-hikes-begin-to-close-community-programs-12719233>

If community access is part of the public justification for redesignating employment land for a private school, that benefit should be clearly defined and secured.

Before the redesignation is finalized, I respectfully ask Council to direct staff to report on:

- A binding agreement establishing community access
- The days and hours available for community use
- A transparent and accessible booking process
- Affordable rates for local non-profit, youth and seniors' organizations
- Protection of the community-access obligation if the school or property is sold
- Public reporting on community bookings and usage
- Traffic, parking, lighting, noise and stormwater impacts

I am not asking Council to reject Lauremont School's proposal. I am asking Council to explain how the loss of employment land will be addressed and to ensure that the promised community benefit is specific, affordable, measurable and enforceable.

A facility is not meaningfully accessible to the community if organizations are permitted to use it but cannot afford to do so.

Thank you for considering these questions before making a decision.

Sigmund Lee
20 Hamills Cres