

April 30, 2025

Economic and Community Development Committee  
City of Toronto  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**RE: Agenda Item EC20.1 – Community-Initiated Programming Policy**

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

On behalf of Friends of Christie Pits Park (FCPP), I am writing to express our strong support for the implementation of a no-fee permitting framework—including the waiving of insurance fees—for community-initiated programming led by local, not-for-profit, and volunteer-run groups in Toronto's parks and public spaces.

As a volunteer-led group that has worked in collaboration with city staff and local partners for over a decade to animate Christie Pits Park with inclusive, free, and accessible programming—ranging from outdoor movie nights and gardening to arts events and community gatherings—we have seen firsthand the transformative impact of such initiatives on neighbourhood life.

The proposed **Community-Initiated Programming Policy** (Agenda Item 2025.EC20.1) rightly acknowledges the vital role of grassroots groups in fostering community wellbeing, belonging, and equity. However, without the removal of financial barriers—including permit fees and insurance costs—this policy risks excluding precisely the communities it aims to support.

We urge City Council to ensure that:

1. **Permit and insurance fees are fully waived** for established, volunteer-run community groups offering free public programs.
2. The permit process is simplified and responsive to the realities of grassroots organizing.
3. Equity-deserving communities and racialized groups receive additional supports to access public space for cultural expression, recreation, and community-building.

Christie Pits Park has long been a vibrant commons in our city, shaped not just by its geography but by the people who care for it. Local stewardship and programming bring our public spaces to life—but only when these spaces are truly accessible to all.

We commend the City for recognizing the value of community-initiated programming and strongly encourage you to take the further step of eliminating the financial barriers that hinder participation and equity in our parks.

Thank you for your continued commitment to a more inclusive, connected, and vibrant Toronto.

Sincerely,

Jode Roberts

Co-Chair, [Friends of Christie Pits Park](#)

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