



**CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 13, 2021**

SUBJECT: Consideration of approval of recommendations from the Youth Council Review Committee for appointments to Youth Council and Youth Boards & Commissions Student Representatives.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: City Clerk

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Youth Council Review Committee met on Tuesday, September 7th to interview applicants for the Youth Council and Youth Boards & Commissions Representatives. All applicants were notified to appear at 7:00 p.m. on September 7th to be interviewed. They were advised to come prepared to explain the following in 3 minutes or less:

- Why do you feel you would be a good candidate?
- What is a goal you hope to complete?
- What would you like to take away from this experience?

Immediately following the interviews, the Youth Council Review Committee reviewed the ratings of each applicant. The Committee discussed the applicants' experience, interests, and schedules to determine which vacancy would be the best fit. Based on that information, they collectively decided which applicants to recommend for placement on the Youth Council and which applicants to recommend to Boards & Commissions as student representatives.

The terms open for appointment are as follows:

Youth Council – 13

Library Board – 2

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Commission – 2

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval of recommendations from the Youth Council Review Committee for appointments to Youth Council and Youth Boards & Commissions Student Representatives.

MEMORANDUM



TO: MAYOR GATT AND COUNCIL MEMBERS
CC: CORTNEY HANSON, CITY CLERK
FROM: DAWN SPAULDING, DEPUTY CITY CLERK
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS
DATE: SEPTEMBER 9, 2021

The recommendations of the Youth Council Review Committee are as follows:

Youth Council

1. Vasu Banga
2. Kaushik Baskar
3. Antonio Bushell
4. Divya Desai
5. Lucy Kwak
6. Jaanvi Muchanthla
7. Neha Nair
8. Bala Abinaya Parivakkam
9. Julia Park
10. Krisha Ramani
11. Ashrit Ramesh
12. Saniya Reddy
13. Vishal Swamy

Library Board

1. Abhay Kakarla
2. Rida Salim

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Commission

3. Krithin Bheemineni
4. Rashmita Raghunathan

All applicants were appointed; there were no students that did not receive enough votes to be recommended for Youth Council or Youth Boards and Commissions Representatives.



YOUTH COUNCIL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF NOVI
Youth Council Review Committee
Tuesday, September 7, 2021 | 7:00 P.M.
Council Chambers | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0456

Member Casey called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Council Members Casey, Fischer, Maday

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Member Casey stated that she would like to add Committee Comments to the Agenda.

YCRCM 21-09-001 Moved by Fischer, seconded by Maday; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To approve the Agenda as amended.

Member Casey welcomed the candidates and said she was grateful to them for stepping forward. She continued, saying that as Council Liaison, she would get to know all of them. She asked the candidates to come to microphone and share their interest in joining Youth Council. Member Casey explained that we will set the timer for three minutes in order to ensure all candidates get equal time for their presentations. She said that the Committee will make their appointment recommendations to Council at the September 13th meeting. Member Casey assured the candidates that they would all do great, they should feel confident about their presentations, and she looked forward to hearing from them.

Member Fischer began by thanking the candidates for coming out, and said he knew they'd do a great job. He said they were lucky to have a great leader like Member Casey. Member Fischer reminded the candidates to take a deep breath and enjoy themselves.

Member Maday said she was thrilled to see all the candidates. She said she knows how much their school district values their input, and she was excited to hear and see what they had to say.

APPLICANTS FOR YOUTH COUNCIL:

- 1. Vasu Banga-** Mr. Banga said he'd like to talk about why he should keep his seat on Youth Council. Mr. Banga said making a difference is his meaningful purpose in life, accomplished through volunteering. He said during the pandemic many things stopped but his community service did not. Mr. Banga explained how he tutors kids in robotics and the benefits of STEM and finds it really rewarding to pass on what he knows to younger students. He explained his experience with Robots in the Park for the robotics team, and the Detroit Education Society which helps refugees and economically disadvantaged people. Mr. Banga said being a part

of Youth Council allows him to connect and give back more, and his goal is to start a fundraiser to benefit depression, suicide prevention, and to spread joy.

- 2. Kaushik Baskar-** Mr. Baskar stated he was a student at Novi High School, active on the robotics team, and volunteers at the library and schools, where he's helped raise money for educating youth. Since he was three, he's enjoyed the parks, library, and riding bikes in his neighborhood. Mr. Baskar said that when he became aware those amenities were provided by municipality, he knew he wanted to give back to his community. He stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic he got the robotics team to make greeting cards and distribute PPE for hospitals and nursing homes. He wants to join Youth Council to engage in positive discussions and learn about government. Mr. Baskar said he's interested in history, which is his favorite subject, and that Youth Council would be an invaluable experience for him.
- 3. Krithin Bheemineni-** Mr. Bheemineni stated he's lived in Novi since he was eight years old. He said he's been a part of HOSA, the robotics team, as well as the track team. Mr. Bheemineni said that he's been on the River Rouge clean up team and has worked to provide food for those in need. He said he'd like to join Youth Council to improve his communication skills, leadership, teamwork. Mr. Bheemineni said that mental health is often neglected, but is as serious as physical health. He continued, saying that 1 in 5 teens has a diagnosable mental health condition which is getting worse. Mr. Bheemineni said the biggest cause is bullying, and we must put a stop to it. He said his goal is to make a difference in the community, lead changes he wants to see in the community, and to give back.
- 4. Antonio Bushell-** Mr. Bushell stated that he's a junior at Novi High School and is a good candidate for Youth Council because he seeks to make a change in his community. He believes it's his generation's responsibility to make change, and he seeks to have a voice in his community. Mr. Bushell said that he wants to join Youth Council to learn from professional work environment, contribute his voice and passion. He wants to lend time and effort to someone else's need, learn more about the community. Mr. Bushell said that people don't always expect youth to have a contribution to society, he wants to show youth care about community.
- 5. Divya Desai-** Ms. Desai said that as a resident of Novi for 14 years, she has deep appreciation and interest in the safety of her community. She has been active in robotics and STEM, volunteered at food pantries, worked to improve the quality of drinking water, and increase driver safety. Ms. Desai said she has strong leadership, teamwork, and presentation skills. She would like to see more focus on STEM by speaking at schools. Ms. Desai would also like to make the city more green, help wildlife and wetland preservation. She would like to join Youth Council to gain more responsibility and expand her knowledge on City government and projects. Her dedication to helping community makes her an ideal candidate.
- 6. Abhay Kakarla-** Mr. Kakarla stated he'd like to be a part of Youth Council to implement changes. He said friends and neighbors often came up with great suggestions to improve the City but don't go to Council. Mr. Kakarla said that so many ideas go to waste, and he'd like to create a system easily used by the community, making it a much better place, and increasing involvement in

community. Mr. Kakarla said he teaches karate as a black belt and plays basketball and soccer. He said by going through these activities, he's met lots of people and heard lots of ideas. He'd like to take this experience and implement those ideas. His goal is to create a community that will allow everyone to live happily, see the changes he helped implement, and make new friends and connections.

7. **Lucy Kwak-** Ms. Kwak stated that when she first moved to Novi, she noticed an abundance of volunteering opportunities. She said that by exploring parts of the community she's learned how diverse Novi is. Ms. Kwak said that Novi has lots of new people, and that proper representation and promoting inclusivity are crucial. She would like to continue with the process of creating diversity awareness and programs for helping newcomers by hosting recurring clubs and events. Ms. Kwak said that she knows Novi well, and its diversity is a top defining characteristic. She explained that moving has been a big part of her life and she has faced lots of challenges in language, culture, and relationships. Ms. Kwak has lived in three countries and wants to be a lending hand. She's been an officer of three clubs and non-profits, and that her experience makes her an ideal candidate. One of her goals is to take away more leadership skills.
8. **Jaanvi Muchanthla-** Ms. Muchanthla said that she has the capability and drive to contribute to Youth Council. She's been a part of Dear Asian Youth, a group empowering Asian youth. Ms. Muchanthla said that has taught her open dialogue, teamwork, and reception to feedback. She said that Youth Council is comprised of students coming to together to help the City, and that we must come together and unite as a team, be confident to be a flexible, leading organization. Ms. Muchanthla stated that during the pandemic she began prioritizing mental health and connectivity and would work hard to serve the City. She would encourage solidarity between all cultures and know that a defining characteristic of Novi is diversity, and she wants to build inclusivity. Ms. Muchanthla is a passionate person and can take action. She said that youth have an unprecedented amount of power, and she wants to be proactive about issues she cares about, be a change maker, and help her community grow as she grows alongside it.
9. **Neha Nair-** Ms. Nair explained she has experience in local government while remotely interning for a city council campaign in New York this summer, and she is passionate about Novi. While organizing fundraising events she's learned the importance of attendance, commitment, and passion. She spent time talking to voters and the internship taught her how to communicate better. Ms. Nair was awed at the candidate's passion for sustainability. She wants to reduce Novi's carbon footprint. Ms. Nair said that 6.3% of citizens live below the poverty line and many face food insecurity. She'd like to invest more in parks and planting trees to invest in our future and create a welcoming and secure environment for everyone. She wants to be involved in elections and learn more about electoral process. Ms. Nair said it would be an honor to serve.
10. **Bala Abinaya Parivakkam-** Ms. Parivakkam stated that she was seeking reappointment. She said that the pandemic has been difficult, but she chooses

to see there has been some good to come out of it; some people have become healthier or started new hobbies. Ms. Parivakkam joined a journalism class to connect with people and wrote a story on the precautions of immunocompromised families during the pandemic. She said that she lost two family members to COVID-19, has been hospitalized twice, and comes from an immunocompromised home. Ms. Parivakkam said that community means together, and she wants to help those afraid of being out in these times. She wants to bring people back in a responsible, socially distanced way, show compassion, and make people understand that not everyone can beat the virus. Ms. Parivakkam wants to join Youth Council for the satisfaction of knowing she made an impact, to build her leadership skills and give back to her community.

11. Julia Park- Ms. Park stated she was seeking reappointment, and that her biggest goal was to make everyone has a voice. She said that there are 6000 students in the Novi Community School District, and elementary students have the best ideas. She'd like to have members of the Youth Council talk to them, and for Middle School and High School students send surveys 2-3 months to get their ideas. Ms. Park said that the pandemic has been tough and in tough times it's more important to come together and grow, collect ideas, and address mental health. Ms. Park said that she's organized a Mother's Day brunch, which brought a smile to people. Ms. Park said she serves on student council, volunteered at 3 hospitals, worked with kids experiencing neurodevelopment disorders like autism. She'd like to continue Youth Council to be with peers that are as passionate as she is.

12. Rashmita Raghunathan- Ms. Raghunathan stated that she first moved to Novi eight years ago and found a welcoming environment that provides a plethora of opportunities to grow and succeed. She has been active in volunteering at nursing homes, HOSA, Novi Community School District, and the library. Ms. Raghunathan said through widespread service experience she has learned compassion and leadership. She'd like to join Youth Council to increase community awareness for teens, including eating disorders. Ms. Raghunathan would like to focus on City clean-ups, promoting equal, friendly practices, and self-development. She said that Youth Council would expand her knowledge of government and participation, allow her to grow as an individual, break her shell, and make the community a better place.

13. Krisha Ramani- Ms. Ramani stated that she's seeking reappointment to Youth Council. She explained that she wanted to speak about something dear to her- coffee. Ms. Ramani said she's a huge coffee drinker; it's more than just a drink, and it's not just about the caffeine. It's a beginning and an end. It's nostalgia, a time to connect and understand people's stories and has inspired her. Ms. Ramani said that leadership is not about the loudest voice; it's about connection, empathy and being people-driven, and success is measured by the people they impact. Ms. Ramani stated she is the founder of Vote16USA, an initiative that encourages young people to create and lobby for a bill allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in local, non-partisan elections. Ms. Ramani said it's about relationship building, and none of that would have been possible without the community support. She's worked with Voters Not Politicians, organized events, and is an officer of the debate team. Ms. Ramani explained that she assisted incoming

freshman and built the debate curriculum, improving scores. She said she's learned to facilitate input from thousands of voices. Ms. Ramani told the Committee that she's always up for a cup of coffee if they'd like to join her.

14. Ashrit Ramesh- Mr. Ramesh stated that he was born in Pennsylvania and moved here at 4 years old. He said he's a well-rounded student, gets straight A's, plays soccer, the guitar, and was on the robotics team. Mr. Ramesh has also worked on outreach in the community to educate and focus on people in need and has taught students in Detroit and volunteered for Village Book Builders. Mr. Ramesh said that his leadership skills have helped to be a good teammate and leader. He said he doesn't have a good idea of how the City works and functions so he'd like to talk to City officials. He'd like to join Youth Council to improve his communication and collaboration skill and meet people with similar interests and passions. Mr. Ramesh believes it's now his responsibility to contribute to the community.

15. Saniya Reddy- Ms. Reddy stated that she's been in Novi for six years and felt very welcomed to the community. She said there's lots of diversity which makes things more enjoyable. Ms. Reddy said she strives to be an effective leader and is proud to call Novi home. She said she's learned dedication, reliability, and communication from participating in HOSA and varsity cross country, volunteering with the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Acing Autism, and tutoring. Ms. Reddy said that joining Youth Council would help her understand different viewpoints, and that the shift in the ability to compromise has led to inaction that can benefit all citizens. Lastly, Ms. Reddy said she'd conclude her presentation with a Margaret Mead quote- "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

16. Rida Salim- Ms. Salim stated she moved from Dallas in January 2020 after being there for 11 years. She said she'd be a good candidate, that her experiences helped her to build skills. Ms. Salim has been a part of the student advisory group where she learned to speak to leaders, organize events to gather and discuss mental health, engaged in yoga and group bonding, and also ran an open microphone discussion. Ms. Salim stated she's participated in legislative door-knocking where she checked into problems and issues of residents. She said she's also a part of teen court, acting as both the prosecution and defense for minors with misdemeanor charges. Ms. Salim stated she's also on the varsity debate team. On Youth Council, she'd like to focus on research and communication, that many students feel stress from school, extracurriculars, home life, the transition from virtual learning to in person learning. She said she'd like to implement optional yoga breaks before or after school and hopes to positively impact her community and build leadership skills and learn from City leaders.

17. Vishal Swamy- Mr. Swamy stated that he has an interest and passion in serving. He said that as a student of color, he's impressed with the diversity in Novi, and learned how tirelessly the City works for its people. Mr. Swamy said he'd like to join Youth Council to enhance his leadership skills, be a voice for people who don't have one, and make a positive and meaningful impact in the community. He said he has excellent leadership skills, and a diverse and inclusive perspective. Mr.

Swamy would like to focus on sustainability and is proud to have raised \$4,500 to host camps for underprivileged youth. He said he'd like mental health issues to be addressed by hosting a tech-free day to encourage social interaction. Mr. Swamy would like to promote the community to take action, especially among minority residents and people of color. He said he would promote an antibullying initiative and looks forward to serving community.

Member Casey again thanked the students for stepping forward and explained that the Committee would be adjourning to discuss their recommendations to City Council. She reiterated that the Committee's recommendations would be on the September 13th City Council agenda, and the students were welcome to refer to the Council packet on Thursday, September 9th to review the recommendations. Member Fischer also thanked the students for their time and told them they did a great job. Member Maday also thanked the students and remarked how proud she was of all of them.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 P.M.

Transcribed by Dawn Spaulding