

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Mayor Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Mayor Fischer, Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Council Members Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Victor Cardenas, City Manager
Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager
Thomas Schultz, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mayor Fischer announced Kathy Crawford, Applicant No. 2 for the Library Board was attending to some personal matters this evening and she would not be in attendance to interview this evening.

CM 23-12-153 Moved by Casey, seconded by Thomas; MOTION CARRIED: 6-0

To approve the Agenda as amended.

Roll call vote on CM 23-12-153	Yeas: Casey, Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas, Fischer
	Nays: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

PRESENTATIONS FOR APPLICANTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Mayor Fischer gave a brief explanation on the format for the presentations. He stated as usual, we will have a two-minute intro, we have all the information that was provided in the application and City Council has diligently reviewed all of that, but it is not a question and answer. It is just an opportunity to tell us a little bit about yourself, your background and why you want to continue serving or serve again or are serving in a new capacity if you have not served in the past. He commented that the interviews for the Boards and Commissions that are on the agenda that evening, there will not be appointments. He stated the Boards and Commissions that we are appointing were interviewed last week. Any appointments for Boards and Commissions interviewed this evening will be done at our first meeting in January.

1. Bob Copes - Election Commission

Mr. Copes introduced himself and said he was seeking reappointment to the Novi Election Commission. He commented that Council has already read his detailed application so he will proceed. He stated a rising tide lifts all boats and Novi is the moon. He said remember the anticipation, the excitement, even the anxiety we all had as the days of 1999 were winding down, Y2K was at the front of everyone's mind. Will the lights

go out? Will the nuclear plants melt down? Will life as we know it be forever changed? He said as we passed midnight, and it became apparent that a new century had been born without incident. Then we became filled with the excitement of a brand-new century, a new beginning, a joyous exuberance leading into this past election. He said we were having perhaps our own mini-Y2K experience. He said for the first time in many years there will be a new mayor. What would that mean? What would change? He stated so here we are now with the new mayor and two new council members. He said we have the anticipation, the excitement of filling expired terms on Boards and Commissions. Joyous exuberance, did I go too far? He said Novi is the moon for many of us, a full bright shining moon and the highest tide occurs when the moon is full and closest to the earth. He said with the leadership of the mayor supported by the council and engagement of all Boards and Commission members. How exciting can it be to bring the bright shining full moon of Novi closer to the community to raise the tide to its highest. He stated that is the Novi he wanted to be a contributing member of where all gears mesh and all wheels turn in unison and support each other. He pledged to support you in accomplishing a new level of high tide. He asked Council to please support him by reappointing him to the Election Commission.

2. Kathy Crawford - Library Board (absent)

3. Katherine Dooley - Library Board

Ms. Dooley introduced herself and said to those of you who do not know her, she is Kat Dooley, a Novi resident from 2008, so it has been a while. She said she was a former Novi employee way back when, even before she moved here, with SWOCC Studios and she used to do AV, she taped meetings like this a long time ago. Currently, she works full time as a 25-year marketing and communications professional. She said she is the Marketing Manager for Detroit Regional Partnership, which is a nonprofit that works with the City to bring in businesses to Novi. She said she was married with one son, our whole family is involved in the community with sports, coaching, in her service in Novi Rotary of which she was president for a couple of years.

She said she was there that evening to apply for her third term for the Library Board. She said it has been such a profound privilege to have been able to serve the past two terms, this will be the third term if she is reappointed. She learned so much about what it takes to be a leader in Novi and to help serve the public because she felt that a trustee, she was not there for herself, she was there for all of Novi, in that seat. She stated she has been an officer pretty much the whole time, except recently, this year, she has been president, interim and vice president for a long time and secretary. During her time on Library Board, she was working on four committees at the same time as being an officer, which was crazy. She said she was happy to do that lift, chairing too, now, she was just part of three. She said she was happy to be there, and she hoped that she could continue to be part of it.

4. Karla Halvangis - Library Board

Ms. Halvangis introduced herself and said she appreciated the opportunity to highlight a couple of things that speak to her strengths as a candidate for the Library Board. First, as a retired English teacher, she had a crystal-clear understanding of the impact that literacy has on individual's chances for success. She said she has worked with struggling readers to advanced readers and she recognized the importance of supporting all readers, from beginners to experts, as well as the challenge of providing the most appropriate support for each. Second, she said she was a problem solver. When she recognized that several of her students in her class were significantly behind in their reading, she teamed up with an elementary reading specialist and created a co-taught class that saw students dramatically improve each semester. She stated similarly, when we had an increase in student conflict, a colleague and I brought together a diverse group of students and created a peer mediation class that helped defuse situations before they became disciplinary issues. She said through that class, she learned about things that were happening in our classrooms and hallways that were invisible to staff and administration. She said as a result, another colleague and herself started our anti-racism taskforce that helped inspire a district wide DEI Program. She said she has seen firsthand some of the struggles that students who feel like others or outsiders experience including those of the LGBTQ community. She said she has participated in numerous DEI training programs, and she understood that providing a safe and supportive environment for all our residents is essential. Finally, she said her experiences as student activities director showed her just how important the right programming is in the right situation, whether it be informed, informational, or educational in nature, or just something to bring much needed levity to the stressed out and overworked. The library is the perfect place to bring people together for a sense of community, whatever their interests may be, like our public schools or public libraries have the responsibility and the privilege to support and enrich the lives of all our residents. She thanked them for the opportunity to speak before you that evening. She noted that if she was appointed to the Library Board, she hoped to learn a lot from her fellow board members. She said she would do her best to help the Novi Library continue to serve our community in the most effective way possible.

5. Alexis Hart - Library Board

Ms. Hart introduced herself, she said she was most importantly a mother of a toddler, little Lily, and she loved taking her to the libraries. She thought education and freedom of education was one of the pillars of our community and our country. It is something she cherished very deeply and she, unlike Leslie Knope, she said she was a fan of libraries. She said she would like to contribute to her community in that way. She commented that she is a new resident of Novi, she moved here about two and a half years ago, originally from Florida and then lived in the Grand Rapids area. She had a political and nonprofit background and currently ran two nonprofits in the state of Michigan, that focused on DEI training, professional development, along with candidate recruitment and training. She said some of you may have seen one of our training courses at some point, but she currently manages a team of 10. We have about a million-dollar budget, and she thought maintaining fiscal responsibility through the Library Board is something that she would like to uphold when looking through the 2021-2022 Report through the Library

Board. She believed a lot of people apply for these positions because it is something they want to change. She said there is a lot that she wanted to maintain. She thought the DEI Programs that have been put forward are fantastic. She thought the programs that are going through the Library are wonderful, and it is something that she would like to help with. She stated she trains candidates, she did not want to be one, so this is a way to serve her community, through the Library Board. She said she did apply for the Elections Board, but she thought the libraries are where she would be best suited. She thought managing a budget and having that leadership over the Library Director and overseeing its general function would be her opportunity to shine. She said she was happy to be considered for this position, and it would be an honor if she was able to serve her community.

6. Ariana Kabodian - Library Board

Ms. Kabodian introduced herself, said she was a Novi native and has lived here for about 31 years. She commented that she grew up going to the Novi Public Library since she was young. She was part of the "Battle of the Books", she loved reading, and she loved writing and still does. She said growing up that continued into her adulthood, she mentioned that she was a published author. She said her book is called "Forget Me Not: Armenian Genocide Recollections." She said it is about preserving her family history through doing nonprofit as the author proceeds go to help children in Armenia, because her book is about her Armenian family history. She said it would be kind of full circle moment, if you will, to be part of the Library Board, knowing that she grew up attending the Library so much, but also because she understood a bit of the publishing side of how things work on that end that she wanted to bring to the Board as well. She also mentioned starting next semester she was planning on teaching at Cleary University.

7. Kelly Kasper - Historical Commission

Ms. Kasper introduced herself as a resident of Novi since 1997. She mentioned she was completing her second term, so six years as a commissioner on the Novi Historical Commission. She enjoyed her time serving the community of Novi as a member of the Novi Historical Commission. She thought our Commission works very well together as a team. She wanted to allow that read workflow to continue by remaining in her seat on the Commission. She mentioned a project that she has cofounded with Kim Nice which is Race Across Novi Project, she and Kim have done a lot of work over the past five years to educate the community, especially the youth in Novi on the history of our cemeteries and to partner with local businesses and work together to celebrate this community event that spreads goodwill and honor and decorate cemeteries for the holiday season. She said it also aids in the beautification of the City as well, and to remember and honor the Novi residents who have proudly and historically served our country. She was very proud to say we have just completed our fifth anniversary of this annual Day of Remembrance and with each year we find new and improved ways to share the Novi cemetery history with our local community members. Moving forward, she stated she has recently begun working on digitizing the cemetery files which are currently all in a big giant black binder. She said the data entry job is going to take numerous hours of time to input into a searchable spreadsheet, but it will make it so much easier to archive. She

stated it will make it efficient for our residents to access and locate historical grave site data and information. She said she volunteers and hosts the local history room hours once a month, every Monday that we have local history hours, she didn't want to misrepresent that. So, it is once a month our Monday office hours and in doing so she was able to meet the residents in the City of Novi who are curious about various aspects of Novi history. She said they come in and search for their answers to their questions. This research activity gives her an opportunity to learn ever more about Novi herself and to share that knowledge with others going forward. She enjoyed being on the Historical Commission and she thanked Council for their consideration.

8. Randy VanWagnen - Historical Commission

Mr. VanWagnen thanked the Council for taking the time to review his application. He stated he was a relatively new resident of the City. He was a native of Brooklyn, Michigan, a small town that may be familiar to some present. He said he was excited to see how he could contribute to his new community. He commented that along those lines, a few months ago, he decided to show up at a couple of these meetings to begin volunteering. He said he had a history degree, but he taught in a totally different field. He said he was an animator and a 3-D modeler. He stated it turned out when he walked in, his skill set fit in exactly with a couple of projects that they had been working on. He said we are already off to the races, so stay tuned. He said they are passionate about the importance of local history, aiding in the understanding and enrichment of any community and Novi has a rich history that is worth sharing with its citizens.

9. Jeffrey Wainwright - Corridor Improvement Authority

Mr. Wainwright introduced himself as a resident and a business owner in Novi for the last 20 years as well as the landowner and his background is both engineering, business and he has done his graduate work in business and clinical psych, and he also did some studies in Japan. He said he was proud to be part of Novi. He said he was also proud to have been on the Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) since we really put it together and got this thing kicked off. He said we have done some incredible things in the last many years, many of the things' people don't know about, but the CIA is responsible for the Grand River Corridor basically between Haggerty Road and Wixom Road most of the work that is going to be done probably in the next many years will be from Novi Road towards Beck Road. He stated the goal is economic development. He explained our idea is to recapture tax money that has been paid, this is not a new tax, and it does not include school taxes. He stated these funds can be deployed in a multitude of different ways, primarily as streetscapes, lighting, park structures, sidewalks, roadway improvements, public transportation infrastructure that would be in compliance with the new transit tax that was put in place, pedestrian overpasses, and various EDC programs that are going to be coming to light in the next many months.

He stated some of the projects that they have worked on in the last recent time has been, we played a key role in the development of the Sakura Project that is at 11 Mile and Grand River. He said there was some land there that was so heavily contaminated that no developer would have bought that land, it would never had been developed. He

mentioned they were able to provide funding to do some offset to allow that land to be mitigated and to be developed and this core project will probably open, he guessed around June of this coming year. He spoke about the other programs in the past that there was a loan program we put in place that would allow some funds to be used for the Ring Road that was to bypass Grand River and Novi Road. He said those advanced funds allowed that project to kick off sooner than it probably would have otherwise. He said that has made a huge improvement to the driving in Novi and he thought we are all grateful for that improvement. He stated there is a lot of work to be done in the future and he would like to be part of this, especially in compliance with the new zoning that is going in place between Beck Road and Taft Road. He believed the CIA could play a key role in that and he was eager to be involved and to be a contributor.

10. Debbie Wrobel - Historical Commission

Ms. Wrobel introduced herself as a resident of Novi since 2001. She said she was finishing up her first three-year term on the Historical Commission and was asking for reappointment to the Commission. She stated the history of Novi is rich and she enjoyed the collection, preservation, and presentation of our history to the community. She has worked on the Spring Palooza Superheroes Event that brings the residents together and informs them about city services. She said the Library talks when we bring in speakers to talk about local history for the community to attend, The Wreaths Across Novi to honor the beloved veterans at our local cemeteries. She helped post the USO Style Canteen at the Library and put on by the Library with music and lunch for the residents and community. She looked forward to working on future historical projects for the City. She mentioned that currently they were working on a project that Randy has helped us with, it is the General Store to show the community what it might have looked like and how it had served a community back in the 1990s that was part of the four corners of Novi. She stated she was passionate about the past and future of Novi. She said we as a Commission are a team to share these stories and projects for the benefit of education and enjoyment of the residents in our great City of Novi.

11. Rachel Yamakura - Library Board

Ms. Yamakura introduced herself to Mayor Fischer, Mayor Pro Tem Casey, and the City Council. She stood before them that evening enriched by a journey deeply rooted in community engagement, equity, and education. Her volunteer roles both with the Novi Educational Foundation and as a member of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights as counsel for government and education have profoundly shaped her perspective. She noted that at SEMCOG, her leadership and regional planning and policy advocacy established an inclusive approach to community service, reflecting our Library's commitment to cultivating learning, inspiring creativity, and fostering inclusivity. Her experiences ensure robust financial stewardship, which is pivotal for our Library's integrity and strategic success. She stated at Lansing Community College where she served as the Director of Equity and Inclusion, she devised strategies that coupled managing a departmental budget of 500,000, which demonstrates her aptitude for adapting resources, services, and facilities to effectively meet the evolving needs of our community. She said currently at Guidehouse, she was leading DEI and Health Equity

Initiatives for the CDC Injury Prevention Center. She said she has refined her skills in strategic planning, leading climate assessments and program development. She said this role underlines the significance of investing in staff and retention aligning perfectly with the Library's ethos of community centered service and collaborative growth. She was very much committed to this community. She said she has been here for about nine years or so. She looked forward to contributing to the Library on a more personal note, her seven-year-old son, her husband and herself spent a lot of time at the Library and looked forward to contributing.

Mayor Fischer thanked everyone for coming out that evening. He said that concluded the Interviews for Boards and Commissions that we need to have. He reminded everyone that these decisions will not be made that evening for the Boards and Commissions. He announced they will be made at the next regularly scheduled meeting, January 8, the first regular scheduled meeting in 2024.