



CITY OF NOVI
Beautification Commission
Wednesday, September 10, 2025 6:00 pm
Mayor's Conference Room
Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road

Call to Order: 6:01 p.m.

Roll Call: Gareth Crawford, Yogesh Kumar, Nicole Rumao, Dinesh Seksaria, Mary Angela Winter, Torry Yu

Present: Gareth Crawford, Nicole Rumao, Dinesh Seksaria, Mary A. Winter, Torry Yu
** Nicole Rumao arrived at 6:07p.m., after approval of agenda & minutes

Absent: Yogesh Kumar

Also Present: Katherine Oppermann, Staff Liaison
Sabrina Lilla, Deputy Finance Director
Greg Cocke, Novi Youth Assistance Board Chair
Sabrina Matsil, Novi Youth Assistance Caseworker

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Yu; Seconded: Crawford; Approved: 4:0

Approval of Minutes – August 13, 2025

Motion: Yu; Seconded: Crawford; Approved: 4:0

Chair – Gareth Crawford

Secretary – Torry Yu

City Liaison – Kate Oppermann

Purpose of the Meeting

1. Community Development Block Grant
 - a. Novi Youth Assistance (NYA)

Novi Youth Assistance (NYA) Board Chair Greg Cocke thanked the Commission for welcoming them to the meeting and introduced himself and NYA Caseworker Sabrina Matsil. The two of them then proceed to provide a summary of the work that NYA does and the progress they'd made in

rebuilding the program over the past three years. They now have a strong board of 15 members and a small paid staff. NYA is making an impact in the community through both youth and family support and scholarships. Their mission is "To strengthen youth and families and to prevent and reduce the incidence of delinquency, neglect, and abuse through community involvement". They work hard to ensure that they spend every penny received through fundraising or donations while closely following HUD guidelines for who can receive funds. They also do the most they can to support anyone who approaches them who might not meet said guidelines. Some of their programs they support are youth band, cheerleading, field trips, camp, etc. It is their goal that every child in the district gets to participate in 5th Grade Wilderness Camp and the 8th Grade Washington DC trip. They also run programs like "Shop with a Hero", "Adopt-a-Family", back to school shopping, and mentorship. In the last fiscal year they received approximately \$39,000 in funding and spent \$30,509 of that on programs. Their budget comes from CDBG funds, fundraisers, donations, and grants. They appreciate any consideration for funds and are looking to expand their reach to even more students and families in need in the community.

Chairperson Crawford thanked NYA and commended them for their work in the community.

Commissioner Seksaria asked what the geographic area is that the NYA fund touch and Mr. Cocke replied that fund recipients must be City of Novi residents and meet HUD guidelines, they are strictly serving Novi. Commissioner Seksaria then asked what the largest expenditure in the NYA budget is to which Mr. Cocke responded that Scholarships are the largest portion, followed by back-to-school shopping. Commissioner Seksaria then asked what the age range is for children being supported and Ms. Matsil said that they are school age, 5 to 17 years old.

Commissioner Winter asked what programs the scholarships go to, Mr. Cocke and Ms. Matsil said it can assist with the programs previously mentioned like camps as well as things like driver's training. Commissioner Winter noted that sometimes schools also put a budget to such assistance and Mr. Cocke agreed but noted that such funding (school discretionary funds) would be separate from the NYA, they are not privy to how much or how they are distributed. Ms. Matsil said that they do sometimes partner with the school or other organizations for larger programs. Commissioner Winter then asked what NYA does for fundraising events, Mr. Cocke said that they currently have one major fundraiser, an annual cornhole tournament, they are largely reliant on donations and hope to have more fundraisers in the future. Commissioner Winter asked about students who are still in highschool but are 18 years or older and if there is help available to them if needed. Ms.

Matsil said that while they can't use CDBG funds for such cases they do have separate funds that can be used for those students that fall outside of parameters. Mr. Cocke agreed noting that they never want to turn anyone away who comes to them for help, they always do their best to support them within the means and constraints upon their organization.

Commissioner Yu asked how it is decided whether services assist a student comes from NYA or the Lakes Area Assistance, assuming they are a Novi resident but attend Walled Lake schools. Ms. Matsil said that if it is a program through the Walled Lake Consolidated School District (WLCSD) then they would most likely approach Lake Area Assistance, rather than NYA.

Commissioner Seksaria asked for a "30,000-ft view" of the budget process NYA uses for Scholarships. Mr. Cocke said that for CDBG funds there is Five-Person Scholarship Committee, their administrative assistance receives and summarizes requests to go before the Committee, the Committee then votes on the requests. If there are questions then they have a formal meeting on it. For exceptions, such a student ineligible under CDBG or HUD funds, the board will discuss the case at their monthly meeting and vote, if in agreement it then goes to the scholarship committee for the final say. Ms. Lilla noted that the guidelines for HUD and CDBG funds are very strict, and have a set limit for applicable persons with low – moderate income. She also shared that the CDBG allocation makes up 34 – 40% of the total NYA funds.

NYA and the Beautification Commission thanked one another for the time and presentation. NYA departed.

b. Recommendation for Grant Request from Oakland County

Ms. Oppermann reminded the Commissioners that, under the new CDBG guidelines from Oakland County, the Commission's request/recommendation for the amount and use of funds is due to the County by September 18th. Ms. Lilla had provided a summary of the grant history which was sent to the Commissioners for their review and is also available at the meeting should anyone need to reference it. Commissioner Seksaria graciously took it upon himself to do his own analysis of the past grants, as provided by Ms. Lilla, and create a draft recommendation for the Commission of \$130,000 (the past request plus a 5.5% increase for inflation).

The Commission also briefly discussed the funds for the Minor Home Repair Program which uses the largest portion of the CDBG funds, as delineated by the County. Ms. Lilla noted that McKenna is out of funds for the 2025

year, with 10 individuals on the waitlist. She stated that no additional funds are expected until December or January and that she was surprised that we ran through them so quickly, she have not seen them depleted so quickly previously. Commissioner Seksaria was concerned that this could indicate mismanagement of funds but Ms. Lilla stated that no, in this case it is due to a significant increase om both requests and the cost of construction/home repair project labor and materials.

Commissioner Yu asked if, under the new guidelines, if Oakland County reviews and disagrees with the amount requested by Novi whether they would outright deny funds for the year or if they would just grant an adjusted amount based on their own standards. Ms. Lilla said that unfortunately we don't yet know how the decision will be administered, we can just fill out and submit the request and then go from there.

Commissioner Winter said that she was concerned and saddened by the change of the amount we can allocate to area programs, a decrease from 30% to 15% allowed. She hopes they might revise up again in the future so we can better support such deserving organizations.

Commissioner Rumao said that given the population increase in the City of Novi she thinks we would be justified in asking for more, and suggest a total request of \$140,000, with the portion of \$21,000 to be split between the public services. Commissioner Yu noted that the rational in the breakdown the year prior was that we gave the largest share to NYA since they serve 100% Novi residents and we make up such a large portion of their funds. The remainder was split between Hospitality House and Haven.

Motion to request a total of \$140,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds, to be allocated as follows:

\$119,000	Novi Minor Home Repair Program
\$8,500	Novi Youth Assistance (NYA)
\$6,500	Hospitality House
\$6,000	Haven
\$140,000	Total

Motion: Commissioner Winter
Seconded: Commissioner Rumao
Approved 5:0

Commissioner Seksaria stated that should the County give a different

amount that we request it should still be administered in the same proportion for allocations. Ms. Lilla said she would submit the request to Oakland County and provide any updates to Staff Liaison Oppermann for the Commission.

2. 2026 Meeting Calendar

The Commissioners reviewed the draft calendar provided by Staff Liaison Oppermann and determined that for 2026 the meetings would follow a schedule of 3rd Wednesdays at 6:30pm.

Motion to approve the 2026 Meeting Schedule of 3rd Wednesdays at 6:30pm.

Motion: Winter

Seconded: Crawford

Approved: 5:0

Roundtable Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: 7:00 p.m.

Motion: Yu; Seconded: Crawford; Approved: 5:0

Upcoming Meetings – 10/8, 11/12, 12/10

Upcoming Events – Perennial Exchange (Saturday, September 20th 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.)