

Interviews for Boards and Commissions

1. Kajal Brazwell - Library Board

Ms. Brazwell introduced herself and said the Novi Public Library has transformed over 65 years into something far greater than a place to borrow books. Today, it offers 3D printing, digital resources and programs you can access from your living room, alongside the deeply human work of delivering books to a neighbor who cannot leave the house, welcoming a new resident learning English, and giving a teenager somewhere safe to land after school. It even maintains an outdoor lending library at their local park. Right now, it is in the middle of strategic planning, gathering community input and making real decisions about its future. That is an institution worth governing well and that is where she believes she can contribute. She is a former English teacher, so libraries have always mattered to her. For the past eight years, she has managed large educational programs, handled budgets, overseen partners, and ensured the systems actually worked for the people who depend on them. That is exactly the work of the library board. She brings that same commitment to Novi's local community life. She serves on the Danny Boy Foundation Board, a new non-profit dedicated to preventing suicide in the neurodivergent individuals where she is the chair of the education and training pillar, helping lead strategic planning and building programs that reach people. She is also an active member of the Rotary Club of Time and Talent and she co-leads the women's community group of Novi and Northville. This is her home. The library is one of those rare institutions that belong to everyone and she would love the chance to serve.

2. Larry Czekaj – Library

Larry Czekaj said he is a 40-year resident in the City of Novi. He moved here in February of 1987 with his wife. He said he was there for the Library Board. He has had the pleasure of working with several members of Council. He knows them, has worked with them and he has enjoyed spending personal time with them as well. He is a former Library Board Trustee. He first joined during the transition from the old facility to the new facility both in terms of the financial aspects of a new building, but also the community programming and the expansion of the services for the library. He was on the board through 2014. While he is still involved with the building authority, his interest in the library has maintained itself. On a regular basis, he has the opportunity to see members of the Library Board, Member Sturing in particular. He said Member Sturing asked why he didn't apply for the Library Board again. He agreed and thought it would be a good idea. He understands the complexities of the library, both from the financial aspects as well as the delivery of service and product aspects. When he first joined the Library Board, he had kids in the school system. Now, he's sitting back with grandkids and spending time in the library. His time with libraries has come full circle.

3. Adam Stevenson – Library

Adam Stevenson thanked Council and staff and introduced himself. He said he lives at 41272 Carriage Hill Drive, and he is interested in serving on the library board because it's really an important part of the Novi community and keeping it a healthy community. To

him, a library is much more than a building full of books. It's a place where all ages can learn, explore new ideas, and feel connected. It might be a place for a student who is preparing for their future, or an adult learning a new skill. Libraries are opportunities that reach far beyond the walls themselves. As a parent, he has seen firsthand how important access to learning resources and welcoming community spaces can be for young people. Libraries provide a place that is safe, inclusive and accessible to everyone, regardless of background or circumstance. In a world that changes quickly, he believes that libraries continue to play a critical role in supporting education, digital literacy and lifelong learning. A little bit about him: he has served on a community board. He was on the NEF for three years. He has coached sports and robotics. He has mentored kids within the community. While serving on the NEF, he was able to serve the teachers and students within the community directly, see the impacts of the grants that they offered as well as listening to the aspirational stories about the kids, about the amazing things they're going to do. Personally, he has an academic background in libraries. He has a master's degree from Wayne State University in Library and Information Science as well as a couple from MSU. Go green! Professionally, he works in technology where he leads teams that work closely with a variety of stakeholders to balance priorities and work through thoughtful decisions and solve problems creatively. He'd like to bring those skills to the board, listening carefully, asking good questions, and focusing on what best serves both the community today and for the future. He is especially interested in kind of continuing this service to the community in whatever ways that are most helpful.

4. Glen Stroup - Cultural Arts Advisory Committee

Glen Stroup said he was applying for the Cultural Arts Board. He said he has lived in Novi for 25+ years. He has three kids. Two kids graduated from Novi High School, and one is currently attending there. He has tons of experience volunteering in Novi soccer, Boy Scouts, the marching band and theater at Novi High School. Art is a hobby of his and it's very different from what he does at his job. He's a computer programmer. He really loves art and he knows that they have really great art in the Detroit area. He knows and follows some of the local artists like Hygienic Dress League, Tony Roko and SW Freddy. He's really into graffiti art, too. He knows at Eastern Market there is a ton of art and graffiti art that he's followed. They go to the DIA all the time. He knows Novi has a great artist retreat in Villa Barr that he would love to be a part of. He collects some art. He has all kinds of sports art that he collects. He also collects art for literature. They also have art that represents their family. He believes he has a few ideas that would be really good for the art committee.

5. Ezra Zimbler – Library

Ezra Zimbler introduced himself and thanked Council and staff for the opportunity to be there. He said one of the biggest reasons he applied for the library board comes from how he grew up. He is the son, grandson, nephew and cousin of schoolteachers so access to education, learning and books has always mattered in his family. Libraries were always seen as something bigger than a building; they were places that opened doors. After becoming a homeowner in Novi last year, he joined the Novi Ambassador Program to become more involved in the community and to better understand the city. His first

time really experiencing the library came through that program and it genuinely opened his eyes to what an incredible asset Novi has here. The building is amazing. The staff clearly care deeply, and it became obvious very quickly why this board and library are so respected. Professionally, he believes he can bring a practical set of experience to this board. He spent over a decade at LinkedIn working with organizations on hiring talent and growth and today, he works at a technology consulting agency, helping organizations think about using technology thoughtfully to solve problems and to grow. Outside of work, he spends a lot of time creating educational and community-focused events that bring together people to learn and connect, from workshops and speaker discussions to community gatherings. For example, next week, he is hosting an educational workshop that brings local experts to help people learn how to use new technology in practical ways. That experience has given him a strong appreciation for how meaningful spaces and programming create connections and lifelong learning. As a newer resident on Novi's north side, he believes he can bring a helpful perspective, especially how they continue to engage newer residents, younger families, help them thoughtfully embrace technology and continue making the library not just a place for learning, but also a place for connection. As someone who moved to Novi recently, he knows firsthand that there are not always many natural places to meet people and build relationships in a suburban community. He thinks the library can continue to play an important role in helping people feel part of the community. Most importantly, he cares deeply about making Novi better. He'd be excited to listen, work hard, bring a new voice and perspective and support a library that already means so much to the city.