



Memorandum

TO: City Council

FROM: Shelemiah Griffiths-Johnson
Youth Council Chairman

SUBJECT: Youth Council Monthly Report

DATE: 05/12/2022

Good evening, Mayor Adams, Councilmembers, City Officials, and Constituents. As you know, I am Chairman Shelemiah Griffiths-Johnson of the Bowie Youth Council. Hope everyone is well.

On behalf of my fellow members of the BYC, I will be presenting an update on what we have accomplished this past month.

Good evening everyone.

Today I would like to share with the city our findings from the 1st ever Youth Council Town Hall. Again, special thanks Mayor Adams, and the attending Councilmembers that were able to support the event: Mayor Pro Tem Boafu and Councilmembers Ndebumadu, Esteve, and Harrison. There was a reporter present from the Afro. For those watching, you can find a copy of the live event on the City of Bowie YouTube channel titled Youth Town Hall. From the event we did get a lot of positive feedback. I would like to take this time to share them with you.

The youth in attendance shared that they would like to see the event happen more frequently, perhaps quarterly, to keep a pulse on the youth. It was also suggested that we actually go out to the Bowie schools to talk to students.

The youth enjoyed our guest artist, Fly Zyah. The attendance was pretty good considering it was our first event.

There is a great concern surrounding the topic of truancy. Chief Nesky was there to lead us in the conversation. We would like to discuss this further to see what changes can be implemented in order to support students.

This then led into the conversation with Ms. Wendy Wilcox on mental health. There was a lot of conversation surrounding mental health. Coming out of COVID-19 and being in isolation for close to two years, the youth of Bowie would like to see more activities that are geared towards young adult's mental health. One resident even shared that they would like more protected free time to

decompress from the stresses of school. They shared not feeling supported enough with mental health in schools and being expected to just continue to deal with it. This is an area very sensitive to us as a youth council. Many struggle with mental health issues, whether it's managing home life, school stressors, or just being overwhelmed. We would really like to see more support that is more attainable to the youth.

In terms of more activities, some ideas shared were Youth Game Nights, coming up with innovative events that have not been hosted for youth before.

Another concern raised in our townhall surrounds the problem of classroom density in the schools that Bowie residents attend. This is an ongoing issue with our county schools and we are asking our officials what we can do about it in Bowie.

Next request from the youth was to have more STEM-related opportunities outside of school for Bowie residents. Councilmember Ndebumadu shared that there is a new opportunity. I want to make sure to mention it here today for those watching. It is an online job program that was recently launched, a partnership with Coursera listed on the City of Bowie website under online job training where you can apply to get a Coursera license. You will then have access to over 5,000 courses where you can access STEM learning as well. So, thank you for that.

Also on the list, was to see more green clubs outside of school as well as organized sports for the youth.

The topic of solutions surrounding trash on the roads in Bowie became a hot topic. Where we have no control, I wanted to bring that to your attention.

Some of the youth were interested in jobs for 13 years and older and looking for a place to find those jobs in our city. So maybe a City-run database where they can be directed to available jobs.

Lastly, as mentioned before, we would like an opportunity for further mentorship from the City Council. Maybe a shadow day or an event planned where we are exposed to more government leadership exposure.

We had a great time at the Youth Town Hall.

Upcoming event:

- The next order of business will be the establishment of a BYC Bylaws subcommittee to create and establish bylaws for the Youth Council operations.
- Our last meeting for the term is coming up on June 2, 2022.

Thank you all for your time.

ATTACHMENTS: None