



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Date: September 16, 2025

Subject

Library Commission's Recommendation of Thomas Celerier for appointment of the new 2026-2028 Cupertino Poet Laureate

Recommended Action

Adopt Resolution No. 25-___ approving the Library Commission's recommendation and appoint Thomas Celerier as the new 2026-2028 Cupertino Poet Laureate.

Background

Resolution No. 10-230 (Attachment B) designated a Cupertino Poet Laureate program. The Library Commission currently appoints a Poet Laureate subcommittee to oversee and administer the program including recruitment.

The Cupertino Poet Laureate Program was established in 2010 by the City Council with the goal of providing residents programs, workshops, and events which introduce and reinforce poetry as an enriching cultural art form, open and accessible to all. It is the vision of the Cupertino Poet Laureate program to stimulate cultural and literary awareness in Cupertino; introduce youth and adults to the personal and community benefits of poetry both as personal reflection and as reflective of our history and culture; reveal, recognize, and engage literary talent residing in the community; and promote our Library as a cultural center in Cupertino.

The Cupertino Poet Laureate is a two-year honorary appointment as the literary ambassador for the City of Cupertino. A stipend of \$500 will be awarded to the Poet Laureate and is sponsored by the Cupertino Library Foundation for each year of service. On December 4, 2024, the Library Commission unanimously approved the updated Poet Laureate Playbook (Attachment C) as part of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 City Work Program.

Position Requirements

As part of the two-year appointment as Poet Laureate for the City of Cupertino, the Poet Laureate duties shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Provide at least two free public workshops at the Cupertino Library

2. Provide at least two public readings of either original works created for these events or past works appropriate to the occasion and audience
3. Participate in two City-sponsored events such as cultural festivals or flag raising ceremonies
4. Attend at least six Library Commission meetings to provide updates on programs and events

To apply for selection as the Poet Laureate, an individual must meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant must demonstrate a significant and meaningful tie to the Cupertino community
2. At the time of appointment, the applicant must be at least 18 years old and a high school graduate
3. The applicant must have demonstrated a commitment to poetry through prior publication
4. The applicant must have demonstrated an ability to teach workshops and lead collaborative community partner events.

Selection Process

On February 5, the Library Commission unanimously approved the Poet Laureate subcommittee comprised of Vice Chair Janki Chokshi and Commissioner Minna Xu to establish a selection panel, review all applications, and contact those qualified for interviews. On March 20, the Cupertino Poet Laureate recruitment opened and was advertised on the City's website, social media platforms, and through eNotifications. The application closed on May 5 at 5 p.m. In total, two applications were received and sent to the Poet Laureate subcommittee for review.

The selection panel comprised of Library Commission's Vice Chair Chokshi and Commissioner Xu, and Arts and Culture Commissioner Panda reviewed the applications and decided to interview both candidates. On June 3, candidate interviews were conducted at the Cupertino Library. Following deliberations, the committee unanimously selected to recommend Thomas Celerier for the 2026-2028 Cupertino Poet Laureate position.

Thomas Celerier, a Cupertino resident and published poet, has shared his love of language both locally and abroad. He launched an international poetry competition with the French Heritage Society and has built a broad social media following that connects readers across cultures. Passionate about mentoring the next generation, Thomas enjoys working with youth and inspiring creative expression. Multilingual and community-focused, he is excited to bring a global perspective and a deep appreciation for the power of poetry to his role as Cupertino's Poet Laureate. Mr. Celerier's completed application packet (Attachment D) includes a current resume, letters of recommendation, and original poems.

Reasons for Recommendation

At the August 6 Library Commission meeting, the Poet Laureate Subcommittee presented their final recommendation of Thomas Celerier for appointment of the 2026-2028 Cupertino Poet Laureate. The Commission voted 4-0-1, (Zhao, Chokshi, Pan, Xu voting yes and Sakthivel absent) to support this recommendation to City Council for approval.

Sustainability Impact

No sustainability impact.

Fiscal Impact

No fiscal impact.

City Work Program (CWP) Item/Description

None

Council Goal:

Quality of Life

California Environmental Quality Act

No California Environmental Quality Act impact.

Prepared by: Molly James, Recreation Manager

Reviewed by: Rachelle Sander, Parks and Recreation Director
Floy Andrews, Interim City Attorney

Approved for Submission by: Tina Kapoor, Interim City Manager

Attachments:

A – Draft Resolution

B – City Council Resolution No. 10-230

C – Poet Laureate Playbook 2024

D – Completed Application Packet – Thomas Celerier