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Youth Advisory Council reactivated

New members to be sworn in; students still needed to participate.

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SOUTH BEND — The revived South Bend Youth Advisory Council officially will be sworn in tonight at Common Council, as the youth voice to city government.

The 11 high school students had an unofficial swearing in last week. The group will serve in an advisory role to the Common Council on issues that affect youth in the community and will serve as youth ambassadors of the city.

The new members of the Youth Advisory Council are: Jordian Bibbs from Clay High School; Jordan Hamilton from Trinity High School; Robert Cassady from Marian High School; and John Adams High School students Maria Catanzarite, Thomas Hauch, David Harris, John Hsieh, Andrew Norris, Lauren Talboom, Tom Walker and Elizabeth Williams. Ricky Hester has been named one of the alternate members.



of problems will cease," he said.

The new members are already prepared with ideas they want to bring to the council.

"Every teen has a voice," Walker said.

Walker found out about the youth council through the city Web site and received guidance from Common Council member Derek Dieter, D-1st, who is his football coach. He has participated in student government since middle school and said he believes youths can make a difference collectively in their own lives and in the city.

"If the community offers more for youth, a lot



Tribune Photo/BARBARA ALLISON Youth Advisory Council member Elizabeth Williams, an Adams High School student, listens at an orientation meeting Wednesday at the County-City Building in South Bend. With her are fellow Adams students Thomas Hauch, center, and David Harris, right.

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As a freshman, Bibbs is the youngest member of the council. She was involved in student government at Jefferson Intermediate Center and has plans to participate in student government at Clay High School.

She said she would like to see a Neighborhood Watch

program in her neighborhood on the city's southeast side.

"It's kind of rough over there; there are a lot of drug dealers around," Bibbs said. "Just to keep all the little kids safe and have nothing going down. I would like some cameras around to keep us safe."

Hamilton echoed Bibbs and said he wants to focus on reducing gang activity in the northwest side of the city, where he lives.

"There's too much idleness on my side of town. There's nothing for us to do," he said. "There's too many ways to get in trouble."

The youth council is part of the city code but hasn't been active in two years. Council member Karen White, D-at large, said the council is "overjoyed" to have the youth council again. She said the Youth Advisory Council is still looking for members to serve on its various committees. High school students through graduates up to age 21 who are interested can contact the Common Council office at (574) 235-9321.

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