



Prayer at Council Meetings

Workshop Presentation
8/20/2013

- » The City Attorney's office provided guidance and a legal opinion. And recommended these guidelines for having prayer at a Council meeting.
 - > Not endorse one religion over another or over non-religion;
 - > Include all denominations and faiths;
 - > Make and widely distribute an invitation to give a prayer or invocation to the general public;
 - > Develop a neutral, random policy to select prayer givers, including a limitation on the number of times any one denomination or sect can give an invocation in a year;
 - > Not examine, restrict or censure the content of the invocation;
 - > Not allow prayer-givers to proselytize or, advance any one or disparage any other particular faith or belief; and
 - > The City's officials should not give the impression that they are expressing an official City religion, are speaking on the City's behalf or that City residents attending the meeting are expected to participate in the prayer.



- » Further recommendations from the research:
- » The prayer-givers must be chosen at random,
- » That the volunteers be informed that they are not speaking on behalf of the City, and that the City adopt a neutral, standardized policy for the prayer/invocation.
- » To that end, Staff has taken items from the various policies available and have incorporated them into draft guidelines for Council's review, discussion and guidance and are included in this council report.
- » The draft guidelines also provide a specific process for the invitation and selection of volunteers that recommends a fair process for volunteering and selection.

