

From: [Fikes, Cathy](#)
To: [Agenda Alerts](#)
Subject: FW: Protest against HBCC Meeting Invocation for 12-3-24
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 11:35:14 AM

From: Tim Geddes <timgeddes3@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 1:32 AM
To: CITY COUNCIL (INCL. CMO STAFF) <city.council@surfcity-hb.org>
Subject: Protest against HBCC Meeting Invocation for 12-3-24

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I am writing to protest the selection of Pastor Joe Pedick in giving the Invocation for the Council meeting of December 3, 2024. Pastor Pedick has shown to be hardly the nonsectarian figure envisioned by the City to represent the Huntington Beach citizenry and, in fact, has alienated many in the community with his outspoken political partisanship and his utter disdain for spiritual diversity in his pronouncements. Ironically, it is the one deviation from the total lack of diversity in Invocation speakers during the mayoralty of Gracey Van Der Mark. She has allowed only two speakers, HB Police and Fire Chaplains Roger Wing and James Pike (both public safety employees of the Christian faith) to open the Council meetings to date.

When Tony Strickland was mayor, he allowed only one non-Christian to preside, at my personal urging, a Jewish rabbi appropriate for the Middle East situation regarding Israel and Gaza. And, of course, at the transition Council meeting on December 5, 2023 then Mayor Strickland promoted the invocation by Pastor Joe Pedick who rambled for almost five minutes before closing with a reference to Jesus Christ, hardly a nonsectarian gesture. In fact, diversity and nonsectarian invocations have gone out the window since the new Council majority took over and kicked out the Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council from its mission of bringing diversity and nonsectarian spirituality to the City Council meeting invocations. Are we to see similar remarks from Pedick this invocation? His slavish and partisan appreciation for the Council majority, now expanded to fatted calf proportions, with the like-minded incoming election winners? Does this portend the further departure from diversity by this Council in its meeting invocations?

We have already given up the office of City Manager to "inside men", first to Police Chief Eric Parra and then Asst. City Manager Travis Hopkins as acting or interim

office holders. We have heard **NOTHING** official about the search for a qualified new City Manager with the credentials and experience in running a city of 200,000 residents and the fourth largest city in Orange County. Does the new Council plan on giving up on hiring for this major municipal position? With the partisan capture of the elected offices of City Council, City Attorney, and City Clerk, is an independent City Manager, appealable and answerable to the entire community, now no longer feasible? This compounds the lack of community input to the decision-making process with the elimination, muzzling, stacking, or ignoring of City boards and commissions.

We are currently seeing little of our elected officials acting, in Pastor Joe Pedick's remarks from the December 5, 2023 Invocation, "righteous in authority" or acting as faithful "ministers" of the public welfare. It is incumbent upon our local leaders to let community members know where they stand. Are our rights, freedoms, and independence to be reduced? Will we be forced to exchange "Surf City" for "Serf City" and allow ourselves to be dominated by the vagaries and vicissitudes of rulers who only have the best interests of themselves and their followers in mind? Enquiring minds want to know!

Sincerely,

Tim Geddes

H.B. Homeowner and 40 year resident