



**CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
CITY COUNCIL MEETING – COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS REPORT**

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: NATALIE MOSER, COUNCIL MEMBER

DATE: MAY 16, 2023

SUBJECT: INVOCATION POLICY UPDATE

On February 21, 2023, the City Council approved Mayor Strickland and Mayor Pro Tem Van Der Mark's [Council Member Item request](#) for a Resolution that outlines a policy to identify, evaluate, and maintain a list of religious associates to provide invocations. This new policy would replace the previous, longstanding practice of working with the Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council to schedule a diverse group of religious associates to provide invocations.

Since February, we have waited for this new policy. During that time, per a 12/10/03 H-Item that gives the Mayor the prerogative to decide whether to open with an invocation, the City has scheduled one Huntington Beach Chaplain to provide invocations at every Council meeting. While the Chaplain's service during this transition period is greatly appreciated, it is not the rotating system that Council has requested.

Given this delay and in an effort to avoid any real or perceived politicization by invocation speakers, I believe a moment of silence would be a more effective way of starting each Council meeting. This procedure would lend the same solemnity that invocations do, while respecting the diversity of faiths and beliefs of our community.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Request the City Manager and City Attorney to present the following information at a City Council Meeting in June 2023:

1. An update on the invocation policy
2. Considerations for amending Council's direction on February 21 with a draft Resolution outlining a policy of providing a moment of silence (in lieu of an invocation)

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Not applicable