



Administrative Policy

Title: Invocations at Public Meetings (Reso 2013-099)					
Administered By: Management Services (City Clerk)					
New Policy No.	Issue Date (Last Revised)	Numbered Date	Department Head Approved	City Manager Approved	Mayor Approved
07200.004	10-02-13 (N/A)	08-04-16			

This Policy, originally adopted on 10-02-13 as Resolution No. 2013-099, has been numbered Policy 07200.004 for reference purposes only. Effective on the Numbered Date noted above, this Policy is hereby numbered as the Policy Number noted above and shall be referenced as Policy 07200.004 (Reso 2013-099) (Invocations at Public Meetings).

Resolution No. 2013-099 is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Attachment: Resolution No. 2013-099
 Issued: 10-02-13
 Revised: N/A

RESOLUTION NO. 2013-099

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
CORONA, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A POLICY
REGARDING INVOCATIONS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS**

WHEREAS, the City Council is an elected legislative and deliberative public body, serving the citizens of the City of Corona; and

WHEREAS, legislative bodies in America have long maintained a tradition of solemnizing proceedings by allowing for an opening prayer before each meeting; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has followed a practice of allowing community religious organizations to coordinate volunteer members of local clergy to provide invocations at City Council meetings; and

WHEREAS, the City Council now desires to adopt a formal, written policy to clarify its invocation practices, in light of and in compliance with the Ninth Circuit U.S. District Court's decision in *Rubin v. City of Lancaster*, 710 F.3d 1087 (2013); and

WHEREAS, such prayer before deliberative public bodies has been consistently upheld as constitutional by American courts, including the United States Supreme Court in *Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783 (1983); and

WHEREAS, the City Council intends, and has intended in past practice, to adopt a policy that does not support the invocation or prayer opportunity as an effort to proselytize or convert others to the particular faith of the speaker, or to disparage any faith or belief different than that of the speaker; proselytize or advance any faith, or show any purposeful preference of one religious view to the exclusion of others; and

WHEREAS, the City Council also intends, and has intended in past practice, to adopt a policy that does not proselytize or advance any faith or belief, or show any purposeful preference of one religious view to the exclusion of others; and

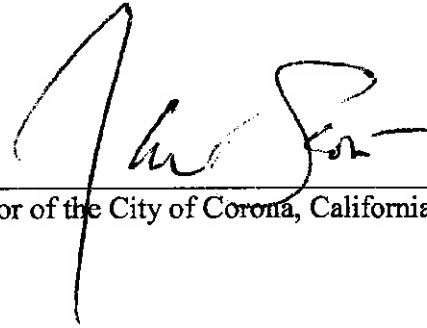
WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes its constitutional duty to interpret, construe, and amend its policies and ordinances to comply with constitutional requirements as they are announced; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Corona as follows:

SECTION 1. The City Council hereby adopts the City of Corona Invocation Policy (10-02-13) attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2. The Mayor shall sign this Resolution and the Chief Deputy City Clerk shall attest thereto, and this Resolution shall thereafter take effect immediately in accordance with applicable law.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 2nd day of October 2013.



Mayor of the City of Corona, California

ATTEST:



City Deputy City Clerk City of Corona,
California

CERTIFICATION

I, Lisa Mobley, Chief Deputy City Clerk of the City of Corona, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Corona, California, at a regular meeting thereof held the 2nd day of October, 2013, by the following vote:


AYES: HALEY, MONTANEZ, SCOTT, SKIPWORTH, SPIEGEL

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAINED: NONE

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the City of Corona, California, this 2nd day of October 2013.



Chief Deputy City Clerk of the City of Corona,
California

EXHIBIT "A"
CITY OF CORONA INVOCATION POLICY

[SEE ATTACHED 3 PAGES]



CITY OF CORONA INVOCATION POLICY

1. In order to solemnize proceedings of the City Council, it is the policy of the City Council to allow for an invocation or prayer (generally referred to herein as "invocation") to be offered at its meetings for the benefit of the City Council and the Corona community.
2. The invocation shall not be listed or recognized as an agenda item for the meeting, so that it may be clear the invocation is not considered a part of the public business.
3. No member of the City Council, City employee or any other person in attendance at the meeting shall be required to participate in any invocation that is offered.
4. The invocation shall be voluntarily delivered by an eligible member of the clergy or other religious leader in the Corona community, as described below ("Invocational Speaker"). To ensure that each Invocational Speaker is selected, on a rotating basis, from among a wide pool of the clergy and other religious leaders in the Corona community, the Invocational Speaker shall be selected according to the following procedure:
 - a. The City Clerk shall compile and maintain a database of the religious churches, congregations and other assemblies with an established presence in the Corona community ("Congregations List").
 - b. The Congregations List shall be compiled by referencing all of the following: (1) the listing for "churches", "congregations," or other religious assemblies in the annual Yellow Pages phone book(s) published for the jurisdiction of Corona; (2) research from the Internet; (3) consultation with the local chambers of commerce; and (4) any available listing in the Riverside Press Enterprise newspaper. All religious churches, congregations and other assemblies with an established presence in the local community of Corona are eligible to be included in the Congregations List, and any such religious organization can confirm its inclusion by specific written request to the City Clerk. No such organization shall be refused inclusion on the Congregations List, and no such organization shall be removed from the Congregations List unless it provides a written request to the City Clerk to be removed.
 - c. The Congregations List shall also include the name and contact information of any chaplain who serves one or more of the fire departments or law enforcement agencies of the City of Corona or any nearby military facilities.
 - d. The Congregations List shall also be published on the City Clerk's page of the City of Corona website, and religious churches, congregations and other assemblies shall be invited to have themselves included on the Congregations List at any time.
 - e. The Congregations List shall be updated, by reasonable efforts of the City Clerk, at least annually in November of each calendar year.
 - f. Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this policy, and on or about December 1 of each calendar year thereafter, the City Clerk shall mail an invitation addressed to the "religious leader" of each religious church, congregation and other assembly listed on the Congregations List, as well as to the individual chaplains included on the Congregations List. In addition, within thirty (30) days after an individual or religious church, congregation or other assembly has been added to the Congregations List throughout the year, the City Clerk shall mail an invitation addressed to such individual or the "religious leader" of such religious church, congregation or other assembly. The invitation shall be dated at the top of the page,

signed by the City Clerk at the bottom of the page, and shall read substantially as follows:

Dear religious leader,

The City Council makes it a policy to invite members of the clergy in the City of Corona to voluntarily offer an invocation or prayer before the beginning of its meetings, for the benefit and blessing of the City Council. As the leader of one of the religious congregations with an established presence in the local community of Corona, or in your capacity as a chaplain for one of the fire departments or law enforcement agencies of the City of Corona, you are eligible to offer this important service at an upcoming meeting of the City Council.

If you are willing to assist the City Council in this regard, please send a written reply at your earliest convenience to the City Clerk at the address or email included on this letterhead. Clergy are scheduled on a first-come, first serve or other random basis. The dates of the City Council's scheduled meetings for the upcoming year are listed on the following, attached page. If you have a preference among the dates, please state that request in your written reply.

This opportunity is voluntary, and you are free to offer the invocation according to the dictates of your own conscience. To maintain a spirit of respect and ecumenism, the City Council requests only that the invocation or prayer opportunity not be exploited as an effort to proselytize or convert others to the particular faith of the invitational speaker, nor to disparage any faith or belief different than that of the invitational speaker. Please also keep the invocation or prayer to no more than three minutes.

On behalf of the City Council, I thank you in advance for considering this invitation.

*Sincerely,
City Clerk
[INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS]*

- g. As the invitation letter indicates, the respondents to the invitation shall be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve or other random basis to deliver the invocation.
5. If the selected Invitational Speaker does not appear at the scheduled meeting, the Mayor or other presiding officer may ask for a volunteer from among the City Council or the audience to deliver the invocation. No City employee shall be asked to deliver the invocation. No member of the City Council or any other person in attendance at the meeting shall be required to deliver the invocation.
6. No Invitational Speaker shall receive compensation for his or her service.
7. The City Clerk shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that a variety of eligible Invitational Speakers are scheduled for the City Council meetings. In any event, no Invitational Speaker shall be scheduled to offer an invocation at consecutive meetings of the City Council, or at more than four (4) City Council meetings in any calendar year.

8. No member of the City Council and no City employee, including the City Clerk, shall engage in any prior inquiry, review of or involvement in the content of any invocation to be offered by an Invocational Speaker.
9. Shortly before the opening gavel that officially begins the meeting and the agenda/business of the public, the Mayor or other presiding officer shall introduce the Invocational Speaker and the person selected to recite the Pledge of Allegiance following the invocation, and invite only those who wish to do so to stand for those observances with the City Council.
10. This policy shall be intended for all Boards and Commissions of the City of Corona. If any such Board or Commission wishes to allow for an invocation to be offered at its meetings, such Board or Commission shall use the Invocational Speakers identified by the City Clerk pursuant to this policy, and shall otherwise follow this policy in all respects.
11. This policy is not intended, and shall not be implemented or construed in any way, to proselytize, advance or disparage a particular faith or religious denomination, to affiliate the City Council or the City of Corona with, nor express the City Council's or the City of Corona's preference for, any faith or religious denomination. Rather, this policy is intended to acknowledge and express the City Council's and the City of Corona's respect for the diversity of religious denominations and faiths represented and practiced among the citizens of Corona.

Please note that this policy was drafted in light of the Ninth Circuit U.S. District Court's decision in Rubin v. City of Lancaster (710 F.3d 1087). Please contact the City Clerk's Office at (951) 736-2201 for a copy of this decision or for further information regarding invocations.