



13 May 2014

SENT VIA MAIL & EMAIL
kbradley@cityofwinterpark.org

The Honorable Kenneth Bradley
Mayor, City of Winter Park
401 South Park Avenue
Winter Park, FL 32789

Re: Invocation Request

Dear Mayor Bradley:

The Central Florida Freethought Community is a local educational organization of more than two hundred members including in the City of Winter Park. We are a chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation and an affiliate of the American Humanist Association.

One of the organization's objectives is to educate the public on the need for equal treatment of non-believers and the value of Humanism; a world view which relies on reason and science as the best decision-making tools humankind has at its disposal. To this end, we have recently participated with members of the Interfaith Council of Central Florida in a discussion series, *Religion 201*, at the Holocaust Memorial and Resource Education Center in Maitland. Alongside clergy and religious leaders of many faiths our members represented Humanism.

In the recent Supreme Court decision, *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, the Court emphasized that a government's prayer practice must be "nondiscriminatory" and it must make reasonable efforts to include invocations from all members of the community, regardless of their faith. In fact, the completely open selection process was crucial to the prayers being upheld: "The town at no point excluded or denied an opportunity to a would-be prayer giver. Its leaders maintained that a minister or layperson of any persuasion, including an atheist, could give the invocation."¹ Therefore, excluding a particular faith group from consideration is unconstitutional².

In light of these facts, it is clear that local government meetings should include Humanist invocations as well as those from any other religious minorities. **We respectfully request the opportunity to offer invocations at your meetings.**

With one-fifth of the U.S. population and one-third of all adults under the age of 30 identifying themselves as "none" (i.e., *none of the above*) according to the Pew Research Center in 2012, our request presents an opportunity for the City to demonstrate that it seeks to celebrate diversity with its actions and does not discriminate on the basis of religion. Additionally, you



will be providing your Humanist and other non-religious constituents with a voice and an equal opportunity to be included in the ceremonial portion of business meetings on a regular basis.

We request that you notify us in writing at your earliest convenience about the next opportunity for one of our members to offer the invocation at an upcoming meeting.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Williamson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Williamson
Founder and Chair

¹ *Town of Greece, N.Y. v. Galloway*, 12-696, 2014 WL 1757828 (U.S. May 5, 2014)

² *Pelphrey v. Cobb County*, 547 F.3d 1263, 1276 (11th Cir. 2008)