

July 15, 2019

Dear Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Members
Wayne Ogle, President; Dale Bagley, Vice President;
Kelly Cooper, Paul Fischer, Norm Blakeley, Hal Smalley,
Brent Hibbert, Kenn Carpenter, Willy Dunne

Subject: Ordinance 2019-18 Amending the Borough's Invocation Policy

Ordinance 2019-18 is a reckless piece of legislation as it will surely create even more divisiveness in our community. If approved, this Ordinance will provide an avenue for one sector of the population to advise the Assembly to suppress another sector of our population by voting. No Assembly member should ever entertain legislation that suppresses the public from exercising their 1st Amendment rights while giving an invocation. If anything, the assembly should be creating more avenues for freedom of expression instead of trying to eliminate them as government sponsored censorship is not the answer. Obviously there is a certain sector of the population that would like to get rid of the invocation altogether and they have tried very hard to suppress others from exercising their freedom of speech. This is just the latest blatant attempt to suppress others who they disagree with.

Doing away with the invocation is not the answer and here's why. First, it is not the Assembly's role to coddle individuals who are offended by what others believe. If individuals are offended by what others believe then that is a personal problem and it is not the responsibility of the Assembly to resolve everyone's personal differences. Second, at the 6/18/19 Assembly meeting three invocations were given under public comment. Those public comments were offered by Michele Heartland, Paul Hubert, and Greg Anderson. So what will the Assembly do now? Will the Assembly now remove public comment from the agenda when individuals become offended by the public comment of others?

Summary

- 1) Ordinance 2019-18 promotes more divisiveness.
- 2) Ordinance 2019-18 provides an avenue to suppress free speech.
- 3) Ordinance 2019-18 is a tool that will allow one sector of the population to suppress another sector.
- 4) Ordinance 2019-18 is trying to resolve personal differences which is not the role of the Assembly.
- 5) Ordinance 2019-18 provides an avenue for Government sponsored censorship.

It seems to me that we would be better off if we all practiced a bit of tolerance and respect our differences instead of perfecting how to become offended. I urge each assembly member to recognize the reckless and divisive nature of Ordinance 2019-18 and NOT support it.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Conetta
708 Alder Court
Kenai, AK 99611