

**From:** Laura Kratz [<mailto:lkraz2@comcast.net>]

**Sent:** Friday, January 29, 2010 9:27 AM

**To:** PETE DICIANNI

**Cc:** Susan Rose; Steve Morley; Stephen Hipskind; Paula Pezza; Pat Shea; Norman Leader; Michael Bram; Kevin York; Jim Kennedy; Diane Gutenkauf; Chris Nybo; Chris Healy; Pat Wagner; Tom Borchert

**Subject:** Re: LWV - Council Prayer Proposal

Dear Mayor DiCianni:

Thank you for your quick reply regarding the League of Women Voters' concerns about your proposal to begin City Council meetings with prayer.

In the League's long history of working for participatory democracy, we know very well how government entities can enhance or inhibit citizen participation and communication. For most people, the most regular and direct government contact occurs at the local level. This intimacy, therefore, compels the city's elected officials and staff to take the greatest care in ensuring that everyone in the community feels welcome and valued. We stand by our assertion that incorporating prayer into the City Council meetings will place a barrier between the City of Elmhurst and its citizens. To some, this will be very subtle; to others it will be overt. In any case, it undermines democracy and weakens our community.

Your rights to individual religious freedom are not in question here. You and all other city officials have plenty of alternatives for meeting your spiritual needs before Council meetings. Your responsibilities as a mayor, on the other hand, compel you to put the community first and meet those needs outside of the formal Council meetings.

The League of Women Voters has been very proud that our residents have been able to approach the City of Elmhurst from a level playing field as equal partners with city officials. We sincerely hope that the standards of good government we have enjoyed in the past will be maintained.

Sincerely,

Laura Kratz

President, The League of Women Voters of Elmhurst