

City of Parksville Response to BC Humanist Society

Earlier this month, the BC Humanist Society announced intentions to sue the City of Parksville over prayers provided at inaugural meetings in 2018 and 2022. Lawyers for the City of Parksville recently responded to the lawyers representing the BC Humanist Society to address concerns related to the inclusion of a “blessing” at the Council inaugural meeting on November 7, 2022. The inaugural meeting included a blessing from Chief Recalma of the Qualicum First Nation and a blessing from a local youth pastor. The inaugural meeting is a unique meeting which includes ceremonial activities, welcoming a new Mayor and Council to take their oath of office, and appointing members to committees, boards and commissions.

The City has confirmed at this time, there is no intention of including prayers at its inaugural meeting after the next municipal election in 2026. The agenda for that inaugural meeting will be set by the Mayor-elect and the concerns of the BC Humanist Society will be addressed by the Mayor-elect at that time.

In the letter, the City also confirmed it is committed to acting in accordance with all applicable laws, and to support the fundamental rights and freedoms afforded to citizens under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The City of Parksville Council acknowledges our community is comprised of people with diverse beliefs, abilities, backgrounds, and world views and wishes to expressly state that all opinions and perspectives are welcome and valued. Diversity and inclusiveness make our community stronger and more vibrant.

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For more information:

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*The City of Parksville is located on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Nations,
home to the Snaw-Naw-As First Nation and the Qualicum First Nation.*