

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

2. Commemorating Muslim Holidays

Submitted by: Councillor Swanson

WHEREAS

1. The Muslim community of Vancouver, estimated to be around 70,000, is an essential part of the Vancouver community, yet has only one of its holidays and celebrations recognized by the City of Vancouver;
2. The global Muslim community, estimated to be around 1.8 billion, recognizes three pivotal celebrations that are celebrated by Muslims in over 100 countries around the world: the month of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha;
3. The ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar is the month of Ramadan, a sacred month to Muslims in Vancouver and across the globe;
4. The month of Ramadan and the surrounding practices are incredibly important to Muslims, who engage in daily fasting from sunrise to sunset during the month as one of the Five Pillars of their Faith;
5. The purpose of the month of Ramadan for Muslims is to engage in a month of spiritual reflection, self-discipline, and cultivate empathy for the less fortunate and build community;
6. The month of Ramadan connects the Muslim community to the other major Abrahamic faiths, as it is believed by Muslims that all holy texts including the Torah and Gospels were revealed during the month of Ramadan;
7. Vancouver is proud of its diverse community representing many different traditions and faiths, which is connected to the spirit of Ramadan;
8. On April 1, 2022 the Prime Minister of Canada released a statement acknowledging Ramadan as both a special time to “reflect on values of peace, compassion, and generosity” and “an opportunity to recognize the many contributions that Muslim Canadians make and have made to the country,” (<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2022/04/01/statement-prime-minister-ramadan>);
9. The two days following the month of Ramadan are a traditional holiday for the Muslim community called Eid al-Fitr, celebrated globally;
10. The tenth day of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar marks the beginning of Eid al-Adha, another incredibly important celebration for the global Muslim community that celebrates the story of the Abrahamic prophets Abraham and Ishmael;

11. Eid al-Adha also connects Muslims to the other major Abrahamic faiths, as it is the celebration of a pivotal Biblical story;
12. Eid al-Adha is already recognized by the city, but neither Ramadan nor Eid al-Fitr are;
13. While the city already commemorates a Day of Action Against Islamophobia, this is done to memorialize and commit to act against a heinous crime committed against the Muslim community in Canada and is not a celebration; but rather, the bare minimum to stand against a hate crime;
14. Despite this, hate crimes against Muslims continue to increase yearly, with Islamophobia being a greater problem as time goes by;
15. When the Muslim community faces increasing Islamophobia, the recognition of the Muslim community and its celebrations by the City will be a strong show of support towards it;
16. The recognition of festivals connecting the Muslim community with other faiths represented in Vancouver is a powerful opportunity to bring the Vancouver community together in dialogue;
17. Canada as a whole recognizes countless days rooted in the dominant Christian tradition such as Christmas, Easter, Sundays as weekends, etc. Marginalized groups still see only a handful of their days commemorated;
18. Recognizing one marginalized group's commemorations is a win for all marginalized groups, that elevates all marginalized peoples and shows respect for them; and
19. Seeing Muslim celebrations recognized may inspire other groups to pursue having their commemorations recognized, and continues to establish precedents for marginalized groups being acknowledged by the city.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the City of Vancouver add the month of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha, to its official celebrations and observations calendar.
- B. THAT the City acknowledge Ramadan on its social media and website.
- C. THAT the City investigates the possibility of co-hosting a yearly iftar dinner once during the month of Ramadan at sunset, collaborating with the local Muslim community, and in the Ramadan spirit of inclusivity and community, also invite groups and leaders representing other major faiths and First Nations.
- D. THAT the City use the month of Ramadan to highlight the work being done by Muslim charities and the Muslim community in the city.