



Report to Council

From the Office of Councillor Amy Lubik

Date: July 28, 2022
Subject: Celebration of Ramadan

Purpose

To gain support for acknowledging the celebration of Ramadan and exploring the co-hosting of an inter-faith feast to build cultural understanding and combat anti-Muslim racism.

Recommendation

WHEREAS, The City of Port Moody is an inclusive city that celebrates and acknowledges multicultural holidays;

WHEREAS Port Moody is proud of its diverse community representing many different traditions and faiths, which is connected to the spirit of Ramadan;

WHEREAS anti-Muslim hate is on the rise in Canada which must be combatted by demonstrations of support and building understanding;

WHEREAS, The City is home to an Islamic Centre which is a cultural heart to community members;

WHEREAS, hosting an Iftar (opening of the Ramadan fast with dinner at sunset) with council, members, and members of the Muslim and the interfaith communities would build community inclusion, understanding and cultural appreciation;

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the City of Port Moody add the month of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al Adha, to its official celebrations and observations calendar.

AND THAT the City acknowledge Ramadan on its social media and website.

AND 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.

AND THAT the City use the month of Ramadan to highlight the work being done by the Muslim community in the city.

Background

Port Moody council is embracing opportunities to heighten community inclusion and promote cultural understanding. We have moved that the City celebrate Lunar New Year and Nowruz and explore most diverse holidays. Since then, we have had the Foundation 4 a Path Forward, the Province's official Faith Convener, has approach us to host anti-racism cafes and now to celebrate Ramadan and investigate the co-hosting a yearly iftar dinner in the spirit of inclusivity and community, inviting other faiths and First Nations. The request is based on [a motion passed unanimously by Vancouver](#).¹ On April 1, 2022 the Prime Minister of Canada [released a statement](#)² 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."

Discussion

According to [Hasam Alam](#)³ from the Islamophobia legal assistance hotline "I think people realize the seriousness of it when a family of five is run over, when people are gunned down in their mosque the way that they were in Quebec, but ... there are links between this and other incidents. We saw during the pandemic a spike in hate crimes against the East Asian community. We saw people talking about racism that people of Black descent have faced here in Canada and continue to face. I think there are real links here and we need to talk about these links. Again, it points to the fact that Canada has a problem with racism. [Anti-Muslim violence has been experienced in our neighbouring communities]."

The latest statistics from 2017 show an increase in police-reported hate crimes against Muslims in Canada. There was a jump to 349 cases — a 151 per cent increase — from the 139 cases recorded in 2016. However, Statistics Canada says about two-thirds of hate crimes across the country go unreported."

Port Moody is a small city, with 40% of our community being Newcomers and 9% of [Newcomers](#)⁴ identifying as Muslim (NewtoBC, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, hate and racism has boiled over in Canada, and cities need to lead the way in anti-racism initiatives and cultural sharing and understanding. We have seen more increases in anti-Asian hate crimes and discriminatory language, and we have also seen an increase across Canada of [anti-Muslim violence and online hatred](#).⁵ Addressing these issues before they become overt can not only make a big difference that community, but potentially all communities who face racism. This initiative also provides opportunities for building of bridges across religions.

¹ [Motion, Commemorating Muslim Holidays, July 5, 2022 \(vancouver.ca\)](#)

² [Statement by the Prime Minister on Ramadan | Prime Minister of Canada \(pm.gc.ca\)](#)

³ [CityNews Vancouver | Breaking News | Top Local Stories](#)

⁴ [B.C. human rights commissioner reminds victims of anti-Muslim hate crimes there is legal help | CBC News](#)

⁵ ['How many deaths need to happen?': Canada has a troubling Islamophobia problem | CTV News](#)

Other Option

THAT the report dated July 28, 2022 from Councillor Amy Lubik regarding Celebration of Ramadan be received for information

Financial Implications

None.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

- Community Health
- Reducing Inequities
- Inclusion
- Anti-racism
- Strengthen relationships with other levels of government, First Nations, community groups, and partners.