



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 2B, 420 N. POKEGAMA AVE.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2015

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

4:00 CALL TO ORDER:

CALL OF ROLL:

	Present	Absent
Commissioner Becky LaPlant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Jackie Dowell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Mary Jo Wimmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Frieda Hall, Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Doug Learmont	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Barb Sanderson, Vice Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Karen Noyce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Alice Moren	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner John Schirber	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MEETING PROTOCOL POLICY:

Please be aware that the Council has adopted a Meeting Protocol Policy which informs attendees of the Council's desire to conduct meetings in an orderly manner which welcomes all civil input from citizens and interested parties. If you are unaware of the policy, copies (orange color) are available in the wall file by the Council entrance.

SETTING OF REGULAR AGENDA:

This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Commission members present.

PRESENTATION:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 29, 2015 Regular Meeting

FINANCIALS:

CORRESPONDENCE:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

CIRCLE OF HEALING UPDATE:

OLD BUSINESS: Indigenous People's Day
Tracks in the Snow
Bukata Hayes

NEW BUSINESS: Human Rights Office in Duluth

REPORTS ON CALLS AND INQUIRIES:

PENDING COMPLAINTS:

OTHER:

JOURNMENT:

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

CALL TO ORDER: Pursuant to due notice and call thereof a regular meeting of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission was held in Conference Room 2B of City Hall, Grand Rapids, Minnesota, on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL: On a Call of Roll, the following members were present:
Commissioners: Barb Sanderson, Karen Noyce, Mary Jo Wimmer, John Schirber, Frieda Hall, Becky LaPlant

Commissioners Dowell arrived at 4:40 pm; Commissioner Learmont arrived at 4:50 pm

Absent Commissioner: Alice Moren

Staff: Tom Pagel, City Administrator and Michele Palkki, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order 4:05 p.m.

SETTING AGENDA Nothing to add

APPROVAL OF MINUTES April 1, 2015 Regular Meeting

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SANDERSON, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NOYCE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2015 AS PRESENTED.
Motion passed by unanimous vote**

FINANCIALS Nothing to report

NEW BUSINESS

ADA Sub Committee

City Administrator Pagel brought this concept before the Commission to get feedback if anyone would be interested in serving if the committee were set up. Mr. Pagel believes the City of Grand Rapids can lead the community in ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) compliance but also making it more about accessibility and not just compliance.

Many areas follow the statute but are still hard for individuals with disabilities to access. This committee would help in designing spaces for universal usage. Commissioner Schirber spoke about the various aspects of educating the community in accessibility that is not just wheelchairs but visual, hearing impaired, etc. Mr. Pagel will discuss the concept with Rob Mattei and get back to the Commission regarding the process and appointments.

Sanderson

Human Rights Commission Meeting

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

Page 2

WHY TREATIES MATTER

The exhibit will be at Greenway High School and Nashwauk High School. There will be events at Greenway High School May 4, 6, 7, 12 and 14 and Nashwauk High School May 20, 22 and 27, everyone is invited to these Free Events.

CIRCLE OF HEALING UPDATE

Commissioner LaPlant distributed a handout from the Anishinaabe World View Training. This was an excellent training and it was decided that there would be another opportunity for the community to be involved soon. They may look at dividing the training into sessions but nothing has been decided at this time. Commissioner LaPlant will be working with the Instructor of the training and work out possible dates in the future.

Commissioner Dowell arrived at 4:40 pm

Commissioner Learmont arrived at 4:50 pm

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY

Commissioner Sanderson reported that a committee has been formed to put together the activities surrounding indigenous people's day on October 12. There will be music, dance, refreshments, and an educational component. The next meeting will be held on May 18 at 4:00 pm. Anyone is invited to attend. A notice of quorum will be posted.

Commissioner Sanderson left at 5:05 pm

INQUIRIES/CALLS

There has been a call from a Grand Rapids woman who claims her son in Grand Rapids High School has been bullied. The Commissioner of Education has been contacted. There may be more calls regarding children in the district being bullied because of ethnicity.

Commissioner Schirber reported that ICC is working on putting together a "Welcome Night" for all students from the College. An idea being passed around is to have people in the community "adopt a family" this would be so all students feel welcomed into the community. There are other ideas being worked out. Commissioner Schirber will keep the Commission informed as updates filter in.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm

Respectfully submitted, Michele Palkki, Administrative Assistant

**CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES
FOR THE PERIOD ENDING APRIL 30, 2015**

With Comparative Totals for the Period Ending December 31, 2014

	<u>Actual</u> <u>4/30/2015</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>12/31/2014</u>
Human Rights Budgeted Expenditures	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Brochures	-	374
Poster, Letterhead & Reprints	-	-
Supplies	-	-
Copy Supplies	-	34
Video/Books	-	20
Advertising	-	-
Dues	100	100
Postage	-	3
Seminars/Meetings/Schools	350	599
Speaker Expenses	250	300
Healing Journey Deficit	-	-
Flag Installation Placques	-	-
City Staff Training	-	-
Contracted Services-Legal	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Balance Available	<u>\$ 2,300</u>	<u>\$ 1,571</u>

**Bukata Hayes Presentation
Scheduled January 28, 2014**

Release: Immediate

The Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission is celebrating Black History Month this year with a free presentation by Bukata Hayes, executive director of the Mankato Diversity Council. The program is scheduled for Tuesday, January 28, from 12 Noon to 2 p.m. at the Grand Rapids Area Library meeting rooms and all community members are invited.

The presentation, entitled, "Growing Diversity in Rural Minnesota: Embracing and Preparing for Our Changing Landscape," will feature Hayes' 14 years work as a diversity director and educator addressing demographic change and diversity issues in rural communities across the state. In this work, he has built associations to embrace change with numerous businesses, colleges and universities, K-12 schools, nonprofits, and governmental units.

"I've been fortunate to have championed many initiatives that have created a culture where all ships rise with the high tide," he said. "I believe that all of us must feel included in the process of change. All people must have access to participate in creating our better tomorrow and when one of us wins, we all win."

Hayes will speak on the value of diversity and how a diverse community creates economic and ultraistic value for all its members. He will illustrate this point with best practices from cities, businesses and organizations around the state. "We need to have these intentional conversations about diversity so that we are prepared to handle important issues of change and to have everyone at the table involved in the conversation and decision making process," he said.

Hayes is in Grand Rapids for the second time in the past year. He previously was a featured speaker at Itasca Community College last August and was so well received, he was invited back to work with faculty and students again. He will present a workshop at ICC prior to his public program at the Grand Rapids Area Library. His visit to Grand Rapids is also sponsored by the ICC Diversity Committee and ICC Engineering as well as the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission.

The goal of his public presentation is learn more about our changing demographics in both rural and urban Minnesota and to hear how other

communities are preparing to welcome new residents, students and visitors. Refreshments will be served without charge and everyone is welcome.

Hayes received his undergraduate degree from the College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, and is completing his graduate degree in sociology from Mankato State University. In addition to his work as a diversity director, he is a member of numerous organizations including the Mankato Chapter of the NAACP, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation Board, Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Board, the Latin American Multicultural Association for Networking and Opportunity Board, and the Salvation Army Board.

Muslim roots run deep in U.S.

'Tracks in the Snow' depicts state's mosaic.



john rash
rash report

At the beginning of the latest Iraq crisis they were called ISIS — the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Then the group too extreme even for Al-Qaida was called ISIL — the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Now, having captured their "caliphate," ISIL is known as "the Islamic State."

Its threat to multiple Mideast nations, and even the West, makes the Islamic State a big story. But despite the warranted news media ubiquity, context is important: The Islamic State is not the state of Islam.

That's true globally, nationally and especially in Minnesota. Indeed, the mosaic of Muslims in Minnesota — this month's Minnesota International Center Great Decisions dialogue — can be seen in everyday life in all parts of the state, as well as in an exhibit called "Tracks in the Snow: The Minnesota Muslim Experience since 1880" that can be seen starting Thursday at the Walker Art Center.

The traveling exhibit, created by the Islamic Resource Group (whose co-founder, Zafar Siddiqui, wrote today's accompanying commentary), features portraits and brief biographies of 25 Minnesota Muslims. People like Arshia Sandozi, a Carleton College student of Indian descent who's interested in neuroscience. And Ziad Amra, a U.S. Bank vice president of Palestinian descent who was born in Shakopee and raised in Chaska. Or Nora Sadek, a Duluth medical student of Egyptian and Native American heritage who is pictured in front of a frozen lake, literally making tracks in the snow.

The exhibit is a testament to the tapestry of Minnesota Muslims. But it's not necessarily all about religion.

"This is not an exhibition so much about what people believe, but about who they are," said Sarah Schultz, director of education and curator of public practice at the Walker.

Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., puts it this way: "There are as many ways to be a Muslim as there are ways to be human."

Ellison exemplifies that fact. The Fifth District Democrat from Minneapolis is Muslim, which seems to matter more nationally than it does in Minnesota.

"When I served in the Minnesota Legislature for four years, everybody knew I was a Muslim but nobody really cared," Ellison said in an interview. "In Minnesota, people saw me as Keith, and when I ran for Congress, they saw me as 'the Muslim running for Congress.'"

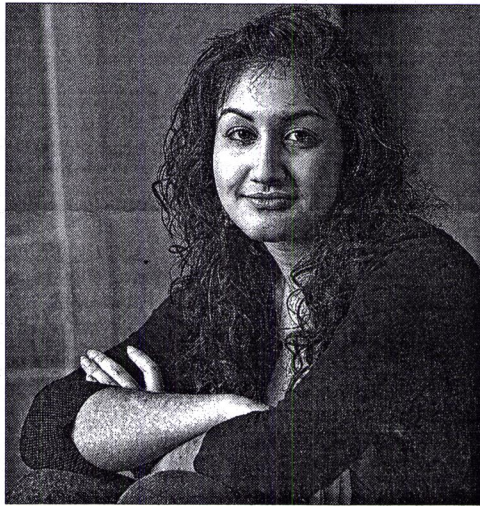
Ellison added that his identification was never as a "one-dimensional religious caricature." Yet often that's how



MARY F. CALVERT • Star Tribune file photo

"There are as many ways to be a Muslim as there are ways to be human."

U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn.



Islamic Resource Group

Arshia Sandozi is one of 25 Minnesota Muslims featured in the traveling exhibit. Sandozi, who is of Indian descent, is studying psychology at Carleton College in Northfield.

Americans perceive believers of Islam, and often that perception is negative, according to a Pew Research Center study that was released this month.

When asked to rate religious groups on a "feeling thermometer" scale of 0 to 100, Jews (63), Catholics (62) and evangelical Christians (61) were all viewed "warmly" by the American public, Pew reported. Conversely, Muslims (40) were ranked last, even behind atheists (41).

Age, race and party affiliation exacerbated some of these divides. But familiarity played a part, too. Only 38 percent personally know a Muslim. Among those who do, Muslims as a group get a neutral rating of 49. But among those who don't, the group gets a much lower 35 rating.

In some small way, Schultz hopes that the exhibit at the Walker — which she calls a "convener of communities" — can change that. "It puts forward other media images and it's a real good example of reminding us all of the importance of the opportunity and the forum to have our own narrative, and not allow other people to tell our story," she said.

Yet Schultz readily acknowledges that "Tracks in the Snow" competes against a blizzard of images of Mideast strife. So does Ellison: "You look on the news and you have Iraq, Syria, Palestine-Israel, Egypt — even Ukraine has a Muslim angle, because there are large numbers of people who are Muslim who live in Crimea. It's in the news. There is no sense of trying to deny it or duck it. You take it head on. So I think [the exhibit] is the right way to approach it."

"Tracks in the Snow" doesn't deny or duck. But it confronts the image issue in a subtle way by focusing on relations, not religion.

"We all have assumptions about who we mostly are, and I think that an exhibition like this reminds us that as Minnesotans, we are many different kinds of people — we are mostly a plural," said Schultz. "It really reinforces the openness of Minnesota to really embracing people and allowing them to make a home somewhere."

And having a home here can break down barriers created elsewhere.

"It just goes to show when people get used to something, it gets a little less scary, which is sort of a lesson," Ellison said. "At the end of the day, folks are folks no matter where you go."

John Rash is a Star Tribune editorial writer and columnist. The Rash Report can be heard at 8:20 a.m. on Friday on WCCO Radio, 830-AM. On Twitter: @rashreport.

The Star Tribune Editorial Board and the Minnesota International Center are partners in "Great Decisions," a monthly dialogue discussing foreign-policy topics. Want to join the conversation? Go to www.micalobe.org.

New exhibit shares the ● diverse stories of Muslims in Minnesota

<http://www.mprnews.org/story/2014/08/01/muslims-in-minnesota-walker-art-center?from=hp>



Nikki Tundel · Minneapolis · Aug 1, 2014

News & Features

LISTEN Story audio
4min 12sec

When Twin Cities residents see a woman in a headscarf, many might assume she's a member of the Somali Muslim community.

That's certainly possible, given the tens of thousands of Somalis who sought asylum in Minnesota after fleeing their country's civil war.

But that woman could just as easily be Asian or African-American or Hispanic, said

lives, to the broader Minnesota community."

Some of Khan's favorite portraits in the gallery include the image of a Bosnian American computer scientist who spent 200 days in a Serbian concentration camp. Another is of an Iraqi refugee who arrived in Minnesota not knowing English. He mastered the language by reading a page of the dictionary every night.

There's also a portrait of a Japanese-American Muslim who says she's "as Lake Wobegon as it gets."

Nearby, is a portrait of Abdiwahab Ali, a Somali-American police officer in Minneapolis.

"For the Somali community, there was a lot of challenge initially in really becoming a part of Minnesota society," Khan said. "But now, people from within the community are rising through the ranks and being an integral part of the Minnesota community."

Abdiwahab Ali is a police officer who lives in Columbia Heights, Minn. "You can practice any religion you believe or not practice a religion," said Ali. "And you can still be accepted among other Americans." *Courtesy of Islamic Resource Group*

As a Muslim, Khan hopes that the show will provide a more diverse — and more accurate — picture of those who follow Islam.

A photo series of everyday Americans may not be the kind of offering many would expect from the Walker, where works of art range from modernist masterpieces to items like a plastic top hat or a mattress of peat moss.

But just as the exhibit challenges stereotypes of Muslim Americans, it helps squash misconceptions about the contemporary art museum, said Sarah Schultz, the Walker's director of education and curator of public practice.

"I think the notion that the Walker would present something that perhaps be more straight forward or more educationally or didactically constructed actually helps to dispel the preconception of not only what the Walker is, but perhaps what our cultural institutions should be in the 21st Century," she said.

Schultz said the exhibit presents an opportunity for Minnesotans who are not Muslim to learn about a community from local Muslims who are generously sharing their stories with others — without being embarrassed to ask questions.

"There are times when we don't always want to admit our own lack of knowledge," she said.

Naaima Khan, development director of the Islamic Resource Group in Minneapolis.

Recently, the organization set out to explore the history of Muslims in Minnesota. The group's review of historical records led to develop "Tracks in the Snow: The Minnesota Muslim Experience since 1880," a new exhibit at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

The free exhibit, which runs through Aug. 8, showcases the history — and diversity — of Minnesota Muslims.

Naaima Khan *Nikki Tundel / MPR News*

"We were surprised actually to learn that we have such deep roots in the state," said Khan, whose parents immigrated to the United States from India in 1979. "Muslim residents in Minnesota date back to the 1880s."

Khan said the state's first Muslim transplants were from Turkey and Lebanon, largely tradesmen and small business owners who served their communities. Muslim immigrants from Eastern Europe arrived next, followed by Pakistanis, Malaysians and Indians.

Still, many long-time residents clung to an image of Muslims that revolved around camels and deserts and men in long white robes, Khan said.

But she said those misconceptions were much less ingrained than the predominant stereotype of the modern era — the Muslim as terrorist.

"A typical Muslim is whoever people really kind of see in the media," Khan said. "What people don't realize often is that there's a good representation of every ethnicity within the faith."

Razina Motala is a Muslim who grew up in South Africa. Her life was shaped by apartheid. "We had to live in certain areas, we had to go to certain schools, we had different movie theaters that we would go to, different parks that we were allowed to go to," said Motala. "We could only use specific buses. We couldn't get onto the buses that were for whites." *Courtesy of Islamic Resource Group*

Inside the Walker Art Center, 25 large, black and white photos of Muslims from across Minnesota wait to be hung on the walls of a sun-lit gallery.

"We wanted to make sure that we create a dialogue that helps shape the narrative of the Muslim Minnesotan story," Khan said. "We feel there are too many forces out there, political or otherwise, that are really taking our story and making it something that is unrepresentative of our community. What we're trying to accomplish really is presenting members of the Muslim community, and their daily