



**MINUTES**  
**GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
Committee of the Whole  
November 3, 2015  
4:34 p.m.  
County Square – Conference Room D

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Mr. Bob Taylor, Chairman**  
**Mr. Butch Kirven, Vice Chairman**  
**Mr. Joe Dill**  
**Mr. Joe Baldwin**  
**Mr. Willis Meadows**  
**Mr. Sid Cates**

**Mr. Jim Burns**  
**Mrs. Xanthene Norris**  
**Mrs. Liz Seman**  
**Mrs. Lottie Gibson** arrived @ 4:49 p.m.  
**Mr. Lynn Ballard**  
**Mr. Fred Payne**

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*Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at the County Square and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned Citizens.*

**COUNCIL MEMBER(S) ABSENT:**

None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**Joe Kernell**, County Administrator  
**John Hansley**, Deputy County Administrator  
**Mark Tollison**, County Attorney  
**Dean Campbell**, Deputy County Attorney  
**Theresa Kizer**, Clerk to Council  
**Regina McCaskill**, Deputy Clerk to Council  
**Paula Gucker**, Assistant County Administrator, Public Works  
**Bob Mihalic**, Governmental Relations Officer

**OTHERS PRESENT**

None

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Bob Taylor

**INVOCATION**

Councilor Butch Kirven

**Item (3)                    APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION:**                    Councilor Seman moved to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2015 Regular Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

*Without objection from Council, Chairman Taylor elected to discuss Item (6) Cancer Survivors Park Presentation and Item (7) Refugee Relocation Program prior to Item (4) Executive Session (legal matter) and Item (5) Invocations.*

**Item (6)                    CANCER SURVIVORS PARK PRESENTATION**

*Presented by:            Diane Gluck, Board President  
                         Kay Roper, Executive Director*

Diane Gluck, Board President, provided pictures of the area to be used for the Cancer Survivors Park which showed the progress that had been made. She stated a large portion of the Boardwalk would extend from Church Street to the Swamp Rabbit Trail, which would run through the middle of the property designated for the park. The Boardwalk was expected to open the first of December.

The Cancer Survivors Park involved a six-year plan which started in 2013. Phase I of the plan was the Boardwalk with a cost of \$1.2 million. Phase II was the infrastructure of the park with projected costs of \$3.4 million and was scheduled to start in 2016. The total cost of the six-year project was \$8.5 million which included a \$1 million endowment and Phases III and IV.

Phase II was the focus of the presentation as it was the part of the project for which funds were being requested from County Council. Once Phase II was completed, the Swamp Rabbit Trail would be re-aligned out of the floodplain to a new 12 ft. wide bridge. The entranceway to the Falls Park and Cleveland Park would be enhanced as part of Phase II. The lower level of the Chamber of Commerce parking lot would be removed to improve the security and safety of the area and a handicapped-accessible walkway would be added. Handicapped-accessible garden paths were planned and the park would be 100% handicapped-accessible upon completion. The required utilities infrastructure was included in Phase II but not lights and technology. There were several sewer trunk lines owned by ReWa on the property and odor control was included in Phase II.

Ms. Gluck stated the Cancer Survivors Park met requirements for the Hospitality Tax funding due to its association with the Swamp Rabbit Trail, a major tourist attraction. Approximately 750,000 visitors were projected to visit the park through the Swamp Rabbit Trail on a yearly basis. Ms. Gluck stated the Cancer Survivors Park worked collaboratively with other local agencies to meet the needs of cancer survivors.

The sustainability of the park was established by a strong Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Greenville who agreed to provide ongoing maintenance and security for the park as well as the creation of an endowment to cover any additional costs.

Councilor Meadows inquired how much money had been raised.

Ms. Gluck stated \$2.4 million had been raised.

Councilor Seman congratulated Ms. Gluck and the staff on partnering with local agencies as well as area health care providers.

Councilor Burns asked who would own the park at the conclusion of construction.

Ms. Gluck stated the Memorandum of Understanding stated ownership of the land would remain

with the original owners, ReWa and Natureland Trust, but would be held in trust and maintained by the City of Greenville as part of Parks and Recreation.

**ACTION:** Councilor Burns moved to approve the ordinance to provide \$250,000 each year for two years to the Cancer Survivors Park.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Item (7)      REFUGEE RELOCATION PROGRAM**

*Presented by:      Jason Lee, Director  
                         Upstate Field Office  
                         World Relief*

Jason Lee, World Relief Upstate Field Office, stated no Syrian refugees have come to South Carolina or would come to South Carolina through World Relief or Lutheran Refugee Services located in Columbia, South Carolina. For the year 2016, a total of 116 was the cap for the number of refugees to be assisted by World Relief.

Mr. Lee stated refugees have resettled in South Carolina since the mid-70's. Lutheran Refugee Services has had employees in the Greenville / Spartanburg area for a number of years. Mr. Lee stated an individual was only in the refugee resettlement program for a period of 90 days and were then on the path to assimilation.

Mr. Lee stated there was a lot of misinformation being discussed in the community regarding refugees and immigration. He stated there was an intense refugee security screening process statewide and outside the United States. Mr. Lee stated there were approximately 1 million immigrants who resettled legally in the United States each year and about 1800 individuals with H-1B visas in South Carolina.

Mr. Lee stated there were concerns about immigration and the lack of security and screening. He stated for refugees there was a 13-step screening and security process which normally took about 18 - 24 months to complete for refugees as opposed to immigrants, where there was no intense screening process.

Chairman Taylor asked if there were other refugee programs currently in place to assist refugees.

Mr. Lee stated there were nine public / private agencies who have partnered with the State Department to welcome refugees. He stated there was much concern over what had happened in Europe with the Syrian refugees. He stated there was a great need to help these individuals.

Chairman Taylor asked if World Relief completed the vetting of the refugees.

Mr. Lee stated the vetting process was completed under the leadership of the Department of Homeland Security.

Chairman Taylor asked what financial responsibilities the community assumed once refugees were placed, such as tutors in the schools.

Mr. Lee stated World Relief asked community churches to adopt or sponsor refugees. He stated World Relief looked to place refugee children in schools with very developed ELS (English as a Second Language) programs, such as Greenville and Spartanburg Counties. Mr. Lee stated there was no additional costs for the school systems to absorb for tutors, etc.

Councilor Meadows asked if the refugees knew English when they arrived.

Mr. Lee stated during the first 90 days of resettlement, the refugees received intense language training, if needed. He stated refugees began cultural orientation prior to coming to the United

States which included ELS classes. Mr. Lee stated most of the school-age children in the Upstate were enrolled in Spartanburg County.

Councilor Meadows asked if there was an age breakdown of the refugees World Relief assisted in the past year.

Mr. Lee stated he did not have the information.

Councilor Meadows asked Mr. Lee to explain the terms FI and RCA which were included in a brochure provided by the Department of Social Services in a meeting he had attended.

He stated RCA was Refugee Cash Assistance which was part of the State Department's program related to employability. Mr. Lee stated the Department of Social Services was able to better answer question regarding assistance provided through their office.

Councilor Meadows asked how much money refugees received through the Refugee Cash Assistance program.

Mr. Lee stated the amounts varied based on need and could be extended for a period of eight months. He stated the Department of Social Services would be able to supply the figures.

Councilor Meadows asked how many applications have been filed with the Greenville County Department of Social Services for Refugee Cash Assistance and how much money had been dispensed.

Mr. Lee stated he did not have the information.

Councilor Meadows asked if refugees were given a social security card.

Mr. Lee stated the refugees had to apply for a card.

Councilor Meadows stated 91% of refugees were on Food Stamps, 73% on Medicaid and 68% received welfare assistance.

Mr. Lee stated refugees were eligible to apply for public assistance once they arrived. He stated after two years, approximately 75% no longer received public assistance. Mr. Lee stated the medical coverage provided to refugees was part of a special program administered by Medicaid.

Councilor Gibson asked what happened if a refugee got into trouble, could they be deported and where would they be sent, if deported.

Mr. Lee stated a refugee could be deported back to their home country. He stated it depended on the situation, the country of origin and ethnicity of the individual.

Councilor Taylor asked if a refugee was accepted into the United States, were their family members automatically eligible to join them.

Mr. Lee stated family members had to apply for admittance but there was no guarantee of acceptance.

**ACTION:** Councilor Cates moved to send the Refugee Resettlement Resolution to full Council with no recommendation.

Councilor Burns stated he was not in favor of moving the Resolution forward.

**ACTION:** Councilor Burns moved to hold the item in Committee of the Whole for additional discussion. Motion to hold carried with Councilor Cates, Councilor Dill and Councilor Meadows voting in opposition.

Councilor Dill requested to have a representative from the Department of Social Services present information about the program and answer questions.

Councilor Norris requested a representative from Greenville County Schools ESL program be invited to speak as well.

**Item (7)**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ACTION:**

Councilor Kirven moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

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Theresa B. Kizer, Clerk to Council