

**MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**August 19, 2013
4:30 P.M.**

CONFERENCE ROOM D - COUNTY SQUARE

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at the entrance of the Council Office and mailed to the newspapers, radio stations and television stations.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Liz Seman
Vice Chairman Xanthene Norris
Councilor Dan Rawls

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) ABSENT:

Councilor Joe Baldwin
Councilor Lottie Gibson

STAFF PRESENT:

Joe Kernell, County Administrator
James Dorriety, Assistant County Administrator
Jeffrey D. Wile, Assistant County Attorney
Bob Mihalic, Governmental Affairs Coordinator
John Vandermosten, Major, Greenville County Detention Center
Helen Wood, Clerk to Public Safety Committee

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Eldridge, Chief Deputy, Greenville County Sheriff's Office
Jennings Autrey, Sergeant, Greenville County Sheriff's Office
Andrew Moates, Deputy, Greenville County Sheriff's Office
Gene Smith, Greenville County Recreation District
Ty Houck, Greenville County Recreation District

CALL TO ORDER:

Liz Seman
Chairman

INVOCATION:

Xanthe Norris
Vice Chairman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Councilor Rawls moved to approve the minutes of the Committee on Public Safety and Human Services' meeting of March 25, 2013. Motion carried unanimously by all Council members present.

MUTUAL AID ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE OCONEE COUNTY (SOUTH CAROLINA) SHERIFF'S OFFICE, AND THE GREENVILLE COUNTY (SOUTH CAROLINA) SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ACTION: Vice Chairman Norris moved to forward the Mutual Aid Assistance Agreement by and between the Oconee County (South Carolina) Sheriff's Office, and the Greenville County (South Carolina) Sheriff's Office to full Council for approval. Motion carried unanimously by all Council members present.

SWAMP RABBIT TRAIL UPDATE

Mr. Kernell, County Administrator, introduced Chief Deputy John Eldridge of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. Mr. Kernell stated that Chief Deputy Eldridge will give the Committee an overview of the Swamp Rabbit Trail in light of the recent problems/concerns we may or may not have had due to recent press coverage and also to reassure the Committee that this incident had nothing to do with the safety of citizens in relationship to the Swamp Rabbit Trail.

The press coverage was regarding a homeless site that had been occupied for some time, which happened to be in proximity to the trail. Chief Deputy Eldridge stated that the trail gets blamed for things that are not actually happening on the trail. He noted the crime incident-scene that was referred to by the press was approximately 100 yards away from the actual trail.

He stated that many of the calls to the Sheriff's Office for assistance are not criminal in nature, (i.e., lost property, medical issues, broke bicycle chain, etc.). So far we have had only thirty incidents documented this year in reference to the Swamp Rabbit Trail.

In summary we do not have problems on the trail because our deputies are there. We have three (3) deputies dedicated to the security of the trail. As stated by Deputy Andrew Moates, one of the three deputies that patrol the trail, that on a slow day there are approximately five hundred people on the trail and approximately two to three thousand on a busy day.

Vice Chairman Norris spoke regarding safety on the trail. She would like the citizens to feel safe who use the trail and that the County is doing everything that can be done to make it safe.

Chief Deputy Eldridge stated for safety concerns the trail is marked with mile markers in case there is an emergency, good signage, and never more than a mile from a rest area. There is night time presence when the motorcycle deputies are off duty and that the on duty shift deputies can get down the trail as well in their cars.

Vice Chairman Norris asked if buildings are still broken into and reminded the Committee that there was a previous meeting regarding this issue. It was noted that in that meeting it was a business along side the trail that had some issues with vandalism. The building did not look like a functioning business. It had broken doors/windows, overgrown brush, etc. which made it look like an abandon structure and this was causing the vandalism issues. Other businesses along the trail have not reported any problems. It was also noted that break-ins are caused by how property is maintained. In theory, if property, etc. is well kept no problems, but as soon as litter is allowed, broken windows, etc., it will attract vandalism. The property owner mentioned in the prior meeting was encouraged to do some clean-up on his property. Only a few burglaries have been reported which were purses left in the car in view, etc.

This report was a general education update on the Swamp Rabbit Trail and was well received by all Council members present.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Vice Chairman Norris moved to adjourn the meeting of the Committee on Public Safety and Human Services. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Wood, Clerk Public Safety Committee