

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

**March 8, 2016
5:00 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 Joe Baldwin (entered at 5:29)
Councilor Lynn Ballard
Councilor Willis Meadows

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) ABSENT:

Councilor Lottie Gibson

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeffrey D. Wile, Assistant County Attorney
John Vandermosten, Interim Assistant County Administrator
Debbie Templeton, Administrative Assistant
Helen E. Wood, Clerk to Public Safety Committee

OTHERS PRESENT:

Caleb Cushing Freeman, applicant – Metropolitan Sewer Sub-District 1
Cynthia Fryer, Manager Safe Kids Upstate

CALL TO ORDER:

Liz Seman
Chairman

INVOCATION:

Lynn Ballard
Councilor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Councilor Willis Meadows moved to approve the minutes of the Committee on Public Safety and Human Services' meeting of February 9, 2016. Motion carried unanimously by all Council members present.

BOARDS AND COMMISSION INTERVIEW AND NOMINATION

ACTION: Chairman Liz Seman forwarded the nomination of Caleb Cushing Freeman to the Committee of the Whole for approval to fill the one vacancy on the Metropolitan Sewer Sub-District 1. Motion carried unanimously by all council members present.

HELMET SAFETY FOR KIDS

Cynthia Fryer, manager of Safe Kids Upstate addressed the committee on the history, purpose, and needs of Safe Kids Upstate. Ms. Fryer began the presentation by asking the committee to consider a helmet ordinance for children 16 years of age and under.

The Safe Kids mission is to reduce unintentional injury of children under 19 years of age. Unintentional injury is the number one killer of children. Unintentional injury contributes to more child deaths than cancer, heart disease, and other childhood diseases combined. Safe Kids Upstate serves Greenville, Pickens, and Oconee counties. It is led by the Greenville Hospital System and is part of Safe Kids Worldwide Coalition. There are over 400 coalitions in 23 countries. There are 14 coalitions in South Carolina alone. Safe Kids Upstate is one of the first Safe Kids coalitions in South Carolina and is one of the largest in the country. Safe Kids Upstate has 6 dedicated staff members. Since 1995, Safe Kids Upstate has decreased the deaths of children due to unintentional injury by 43%. The unintentional injury of children has been reduced by 22%. These statistics are supported by SC DHEC Bureau of Maternal and Child Health.

Councilor Ballard asked about the factors that contributed to this decrease in child deaths and injuries. Ms. Fryer stated many factors are taken into consideration. Safe Kids focuses on: child passenger safety, bike/helmet safety, pedestrian safety, distracted driving/walking, sports safety and home safety. Safe Kids Upstate also manages the Safety Patrol Program in all 53 schools within the upstate.

Councilor Meadows asked for confirmation that deaths have decreased by 43%. Ms. Fryer affirmed this fact.

Cynthia Fryer continued with a power point presentation. The presentation focused on bicycle trauma and injuries observed by the Greenville Memorial Hospital 2009-2015. She explained there was an increase of these types of injuries around 2011 and 2012, which coincided with the opening of a major trail in Greenville. A concentrated effort on bicycle safety, helmet safety and bike skills has allowed for a slight decrease in the number of injuries 2013-2015. Per GHS statistics, 81% of all bike trauma/injury seen in the ER are admitted to the hospital for ongoing treatment, surgery, or ICU admission. None of the 81% admitted to the hospital were wearing a helmet at the time the injury was sustained. Of those children (19%) who were discharged from the ER, 75% of them were wearing helmet.

Councilor Meadows would like a breakdown of types of injuries sustained by the 81% admitted to the hospital from the ER. Ms. Fryer did not have those numbers on hand, but agreed to provide those numbers to the committee.

Ms. Fryer went on to explain that not every injury can be prevented. However, some studies and statistics show that wearing a helmet reduces the severity of bicycle injuries and deaths. Due to these staggering numbers, Safe Kids Upstate has fitted 4200 children with bike helmets 2014-2015. Safe Kids Upstate would also like for Greenville to consider leading the way for South Carolina and implementing a helmet ordinance. 21 states, including those that border SC already have state-

wide bicycle helmet laws in place. South Carolina is one of 29 states that do not have state-wide bicycle helmet laws. South Carolina is 1 of only 13 states without any local helmet laws.

Councilor Meadows inquired as to any statistics that might show the number of people who wear bicycle helmets while utilizing the Swamp Rabbit Trail from 2010 to present. Ms. Fryer stated, in 2014, 80% of Swamp Rabbit Trail users were bicyclists. There are statistics showing helmet use of trail users from 2011-2014. Ms. Fryer will obtain these numbers and provide to the committee.

Councilor Meadows asked when Safe Kids Upstate began and what the initial emphasis was at that time. Ms. Frye replied Safe Kids Upstate began 20 years ago in 1995 with an emphasis of overall child safety. It began with bike helmets, bike safety, and car seats.

Councilor Ballard asked if the injuries sustained are from bike vs. car accidents or single party accidents. Ms. Frye said it varies. The more severe injuries are sustained from bike vs. car accidents. However, there are fewer of these types of accidents.

Councilor Ballard inquired into demographics showing location of bike accidents. Ms. Frye did not have the information available, but will obtain this information and provide to the committee.

Chairman Seman questioned how a helmet ordinance might be enforced. Chairman Seman also asked if the surrounding states are seeing success with their laws. Ms. Frye explained that Safe Kids would not want any ordinance to be punitive, but used as a learning tool. The citations would be graduated depending on number of offenses and any citation could be waived if the parent/guardian shows the bicycle helmet. Ms. Frye said surrounding states are finding success with their laws, especially Georgia and North Carolina.

Councilor Meadows asked if the injury/trauma numbers could be broken down into the ages of the child. Ms. Frye said the numbers offered in the presentation are for children 16 and under. Councilor Meadows inquired if adult numbers for these types of injury/trauma are available. Ms. Frye will obtain the numbers for adults injured in bicycle accidents broken down by age and provide to the committee.

Councilor Meadows asked if an ordinance could not be accomplished, what would be the next best thing to assist Safe Kids Upstate. Ms. Frye replied to name a few "Bike Safety Days" which would be used to get out and educate on bike safety and fit children for helmets.

Chairman Seman thanked Cynthia Frye of Safe Kids Upstate for the presentation. Chairman Seman asked Ms. Frye to forward the requested information and told her to keep up the good work.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Councilor Willis Meadows moved to adjourn the meeting of the Committee on Public Safety and Human Services. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Templeton, Administrative Assistant