

Regular Meeting

Agenda Item #	1
Meeting Date	November 30, 2015
Prepared By	Jessie Carpenter City Clerk
Reviewed By	Suzanne Ludlow City Manager

Discussion Item	Resolution Welcoming Syrian Refugees
Background	<p>In light of the refugee crisis spawned by the conflict in Syria, and the opposition and fear expressed by some communities and groups to resettling these refugees in the United States, the City Council wishes to reaffirm Takoma Park's commitment to welcoming and supporting Syrian refugees in the community.</p> <p>Councilmember Qureshi drafted the attached resolution to convey the Council's intentions.</p>
Policy	The City of Takoma Park is a sanctuary city. Diversity, inclusiveness, and community engagement are values promoted by the City Council.
Fiscal Impact	N/A
Attachments	Resolution Welcoming Syrian Refugees
Recommendation	Adopt the resolution.
Special Consideration	

PROPOSED RESOLUTION WELCOMING SYRIAN REFUGEES

- WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park has a long history of welcoming immigrants and building a caring, inclusive and strong community which celebrates its diversity; and
- WHEREAS, our neighbors include individuals from all parts of the world who speak many different languages, making Takoma Park truly a city of immigrants; and
- WHEREAS, the conflict in Syria has presented one of the worst refugee crises since World War II; and
- WHEREAS, more than seven million Syrians have been displaced by war, more than half of whom are under eighteen years old; and
- WHEREAS, President Barack Obama has committed to accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees into the United States within the next year; and
- WHEREAS, those individuals wishing to emigrate to the United States under the President's refugee program must apply through the United Nations, and if accepted, are subject to a rigorous and multi-layered security screening program, including an in-person interview, administered by the Department of Homeland Security; and
- WHEREAS, the intense background and medical checks required of refugees to the United States can take as long as 24 months to complete; and
- WHEREAS, we share the view of many national security experts, that failing to help "refugees resettle as quickly as possible is, in itself, a factor that can increase risk for Americans the world over;" and
- WHEREAS, opening our doors to those who are fleeing violence does not endanger our safety; but rather shows our compassion and hope; and
- WHEREAS, since 2011, 39 Syrian refugees have been settled in the State of Maryland; and
- WHEREAS, the City Council hereby reaffirms the City of Takoma Park's commitment to remain a place of sanctuary and a safe haven for refugees from around the world, regardless of their national origin.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of Takoma Park, Maryland hereby affirms its duty to welcome our Syrian neighbors because to shut the door on those in need is inconsistent with basic values of our community.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Takoma Park will work with other levels of government and non-governmental agencies to identify ways in which the community can provide support for refugee families relocating to the Takoma Park area and integrating into our community.