PRAB Report #2016-1

January 6, 2016

PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

Subject:

Recognition Group Application

Background:

At the Park and Recreation Advisory Board's December 16, 2015 meeting, PRAB reviewed a new 2015 application: *Boys to Men Mentoring Network of Greater Washington*. In regards to the *Boys to Men Mentoring Network* application, PRAB met with the President of the group, Mr. Blix Winston, two of the mentees Jaden Dirksen and Justin Mooney and their fathers, as well as one of the mentors, Mr. Walter Augustine.

Discussion:

PRAB members and the members representing *Boys to Men Mentoring Network of Greater Washington* discussed the organization, which supports at risk teens 13-18 years of age. Both of the mentees were residents of Greenbelt, one a student from Eleanor Roosevelt and the other a young man who is homeschooled. One of the mentees stated that, "He felt this was a group that many boys would be interested in if it were held in Greenbelt; and lots of boys need someone else to talk to besides their parents." Mentees were asked how this group would help the Greenbelt community and their answers were: 1) Help boys figure out where they are going in life and find their way; 2) which will make them better individuals; 3) which will hopefully make them productive members of the community.

The mentors and mentees meet as a support group, culminating in a "Rites of Passage" weekend.

PRAB was assured that all the volunteer mentors have full criminal background checks and that no boys are ever alone with just one volunteer. Further, the mentors receive extensive leadership training. Mr. Winston also mentioned that they were not a religious-based organization.

PRAB agreed that an organization that supports boys as they transition through the teen years would be an asset to the Greenbelt community. It was noted that Greenbelt CARES might refer boys to this program.

The group is looking for free meeting space in the City twice a month. The Recognition Group status and limiting factor of meeting space availability was explained to them.

Recommendations:

PRAB recommends *Boys to Men Mentoring Network of Greater Washington* receive Recognition Group status. Vote: 5-yes; 0-no; and 1-abstention with no comment on the abstention.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lola Skolnik

Chair, Park and Recreation Advisory Board