Report 2016-1
February 2, 2015

COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (CRAB)
REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Preservation & Maintenance of the Turner Family Cemetery

BACKGROUND: Prior to Greenbelt's construction, the Turner Family owned a large plantation in what is now Greenbelt West. When the Federal Government built the town, the Greenbelt Cemetery was established adjacent to the Turner Family burial plot. There is a display case at the site with the only remaining engraved headstone and a historical monograph about the Turner Family

DISCUSSION: At the CRAB meeting on 11/12/15, Dan Hamlin expressed concern that the Turner burial plot was not being properly maintained and the monograph was inaccurate. These concerns were based on extensive research conducted by Kyla Hanington while writing a news article on historic cemeteries in Greenbelt. Dan and Kyla identified 15 stones at the family plot marking nine graves. On 11/21/15 several members of CRAB visited the Turner Cemetery site to view these graves. CRAB considered this matter at a meeting on 1/12/16 and approved the following recommendations as an initial step in preserving identified graves with the dignity and respect they deserve. CRAB expects subsequent discovery and identification of the greater area for possible additional gravesites.

RECOMENDATIONS:

1. The perimeter of the area with known graves be marked with steel posts and chains similar to that used in the modern section of the cemetery.
2. The underbrush, leaves and debris be cleared from the area.
3. The display case containing the gravestone of Thomas P. Turner be refurbished so that the stone is more clearly visible.
4. The inaccurate and incomplete historical monograph in the display case be rewritten to:
    a. Correct the age of death of Tomas Turner who was married to Flavia Parker in 1843 and 45 years old at the time of his death in 1855, not 15.
    b. Include mention of people held as slaves by the Turner family as documented in the 1790 census and Turner family bible and likely buried on the site.

Respectfully Submitted

Rick Ransom, Chair
Community Relations Advisory Board