

12/3/09

To: The Fernald Reuse Committee, Public Hearing
Date: Dec. 3, 2009
From: Dee Kricker
24 Hillcrest Street, Waltham

I would like to first thank the members of both the Fernald Working Group and the Fernald Reuse Committee for their continuing efforts to discover and to determine what this land, this historic site wants to be in the future. I also want to thank Rep. Tom Stanley for his initiative in filing legislation to establish this advisory reuse committee back in 2003, when then Governor Romney made his decision to close the school.

So, at this hearing, and hopefully, at this listening, I wonder what does this land want to be, what does the community want it to be and what difference does it make what happens on these 190 acres? We know what a difference new development can make to our city, because we have had lots of it to evaluate during this period. The development that we most notice, however, is that which has not reflected what either the community, nor the land itself would have wanted in a best case scenario. Thus, we understand how valuable is this opportunity for us, as citizens and community stakeholders, to give our input in how development might proceed with thoughtful and careful planning to achieve the very best use of this unique property.

I would like to voice my support for the proposal presented by the Fernald Working Group. This vision of how best to transform the Fernald State Campus represents a comprehensive community-based approach to sustainable development. The work of this committee that began in 2003, reflects a practical, but true *vision* of what can and should be, as they have looked deeply at this land, and into its history. It reflects the voices of our community at large, as represented by the individual members and advisors, the group endorsements, and the synthesis of research collected by the FWG over the past six years regarding best practices for smart growth development. From the beginning, there has been a consensus that the particular history of this land as it evolved from 1888 to the present time, 121 years, must inform its future transformation. Thus, the touchstone for understanding how the land should evolve from its current status starts with an awareness, an acknowledgement of the fact that the lives of thousands of persons with all manner of developmental disabilities were forever, radically changed, by their relocation to this facility. That this land is literally, a special place. A place of richly liberating stories, as well as, other stories that serve as lessons to avoid. A place where thousands of individuals lived out their challenging lives and also, a place where thousands of others worked to lessen those challenges: the nurses, doctors, therapists and professional caregivers.

Following from this appreciation of its special history, the FWG envisions a sustainable village that preserves housing and services for current residents, and expands residential opportunities and supportive services for others. Incorporated into this model are various mixed income clustered housing units, built with the highest efficiencies for energy use, along with small scale retail establishments and a centralized village green. The reuse of existing campus buildings that have historical importance and that are adaptable for repurposing is recommended. Surrounding the central village and inclusive of the community's wishes for this site are the following: preservation of key architectural features of buildings and natural areas; restoration of contaminated areas and restoration of degraded streams and wetlands; dedication of a segment of the Western Greenway corridor traversing from Trapelo Road to the southeast border of the UMass property; reestablishment of agricultural areas to include a community farm that harkens back to previous agricultural uses of the land, both during the Fernald era and further back to Waltham's agricultural roots in the late 17th and 18th century. All of these ideas and more are further described in the FWG's A Community Vision, a vision of some elasticity that is a work in progress, but that defines the parameters for the future.

To conclude, I think the land, its history and the community know best what the future of this site should be. To view the opportunity for development otherwise, is to miss a defining moment for the City of Waltham in controlling its future identity. Thank you.

12/3/09

November 23, 2009

Joe Vizard

Fernald Reuse Committee

c/o Mayor's Office

Waltham City Hall.

610 Main Street

Waltham, MA 02452

Dear Mr. Vizard:

Thank you for the opportunity to present an idea to the Fernald Re-Use Committee. I would like to propose a world-class, "birth to grave" campus that provides medical, therapeutic, housing, employment, and training services for people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There are a number of organizations that might be interested in such a plan, since many providers are looking for space to accommodate the growing number of patients with an ASD.

This campus would satisfy the open space requirements by including Councilor George A. Darcy III's tree nursery idea and Waltham Fields proposed use, and the work force could include people living at or

being supported by the campus. It would also provide affordable mixed housing that the Commonwealth, the Fernald League, and W.A.T.C.H. are looking for. I envision this to be modeled after some of the senior housing like *Brooksby Village*, only it would be for adults with an ASD, and other related disabilities, where medical, therapeutic, housing, education, employment, social and recreation opportunities are accessible in one location, in a city where 2 universities conduct autism research with substantial grants from government agencies, and Children's hospital where the Autism Language Program is located.

Since the property is accessible to routes 128, and 2, there could also be a hotel with a conference center where visiting researchers and practitioners, and businesses could hold their meetings. Adults with an ASD could learn technological skills from the area through the high-tech businesses, high schools, colleges, WCAC-TV, and BU Digital School, and could work in the conference center. They could also work in the housekeeping and food services, which along with landscaping would offer many choices to help make them productive and contributing members to the tax base. These employment options seem much more satisfying than what is most often available, and

along with an income from a job they enjoy, their self-esteem would improve.

The Parks and Recreation Department also expressed an interest in the property and I can see a place for them accessible to the campus. This organization is instrumental in providing an inclusive setting and many opportunities for children with special needs through the supports from the Recreation Plus program at GWARC. Having recreation facilities on the property that are open to the public would allow children with special needs a way to learn from peers models from their own community. For this special population, learned and practiced skill sets can transfer to other settings successfully once they are honed in a conducive environment with the right supports in place. These programs would be staffed appropriately and not interfere with the experience others from the community expect when participating in recreation activities.

On November 24, 2009, Governor Deval Patrick will hold a Massachusetts Human Services Summit at UMass Boston. This is an invitation only event and he wants to hear ideas and recommendations for how state government, non-profit human services organizations, and the private sector might work together to further a progressive

human services agenda in this economy on 1) Assuring a Strong Human Services Workforce, 2) Reengineering State Government to be more responsive and, 3) Strategies for Sustainability and Growth of the Sector. An inclusive campus, as described above, here in Waltham would encourage many who seek employment in the human services field, to come here to work and provide the sustainability the Governor is looking for.

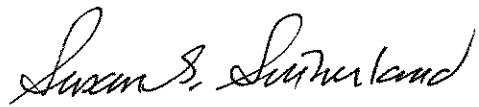
To some, the Fernald represents a time of sadness and despair. To others, Fernald is the only home their loved ones have ever known. I feel this community campus would be a wonderful way to turn things around and change people's perspective by creating something positive and sustaining. Waltham has a history rich in being the first in many things and this campus idea is in keeping with this claim. I have information about business models that employ people with ASD because of their unique strengths and the way they see and experience the world, that benefit some business sectors and I would be happy to share this with the committee.

Thank you for considering this idea of a multi-purpose campus that would improve the quality of life and address the urgent needs for 1%

of the population. There needs to be a better understanding of the origins of ASD, and there are a number of research efforts addressing that. Right now the immediate need is to help these people integrate into our larger community, as the ASD population is growing and being cared for by aging parents. Some will need support and care, and some can live quite independently and could very well enter the work force if programs were made available that offered job training by qualified staff.

Ten years ago the autism prevalence rate was 1 in 2,000, and today it is 1 in 91. It could be due to better diagnosis but the bottom line is people with ASD and their families are in need of many things right now and in the very near future. Many of these people are dedicated talented individuals and have so much to offer and given the chance could contribute much to the Waltham economy. I hope the Fernald Re-Use Committee will consider this proposal as a viable solution and it can be an example to others on what a community can do to improve the lives of their residents so they too may thrive and prosper.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan S. Sutherland". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Susan Sutherland

71 Ellery Road

Waltham, MA 02453

REUSE OF THE FERNALD CENTER – A COMMUNITY VISION

A Work in Progress, November 2009

The Fernald Working Group arose out of a coalition of Waltham community members and residents who wanted to see a community-based proposal for the redevelopment of the Fernald School site, one of the City's largest and last remaining tracts of developable land. The decision to decommission Fernald offers the community a unique opportunity to develop a vision that benefits all of the residents of Waltham. While we are made up of people who are mostly concerned with affordable housing, open space and the current residents, after identifying what we wanted to see happen at the site, we realized we were talking about a new kind of sustainable project for Waltham.

Overview

The Fernald Working Group proposes the implementation of sustainable development principles – those that are environmentally and economically efficient and that provide long lasting benefit to the entire community - to direct the future use of the Fernald Center in Waltham, Massachusetts. A large site of approximately 190 acres, the Fernald Center contains all of the elements needed for a model sustainable, multi-purpose development:

- A beautiful campus that includes enough acreage to enlarge current open space and counteract a history of sprawl in this community
- historic buildings designed by renowned architects suitable for renovation and adaptive reuse,
- location in a City and region rich in resources, including outstanding academic institutions, rail transportation to downtown Boston, nearby industry on Route 95/128, and wide range of local business enterprises and social service programs;
- and, location in a City with a longstanding, demonstrated commitment to identifying, developing, and supporting new and more effective methods of caring for those in need of assistance and support.

The Fernald campus also offers an opportunity for Waltham to constructively address community concerns:

- Create affordable housing;
- Improve access to the public transportation system which could easily be addressed with minimal effort;
- Reclaim contaminated land;
- Provide economic development opportunities particularly for small businesses using a neighborhood or town center model.

Due to the availability of large tracts of land in recent years, Waltham has been the site or target of a number of large residential projects by private developers. These projects have been viewed by many in the community as having a negative effect on the environment and further increasing sprawl. The community of Waltham is united in wanting to preserve open space and at the same time, increase the stock of affordable housing for its citizenry, but that can be best accomplished

important part of the Center's life. All of these services could become part of the community and economic life of the Fernald redevelopment. The creation of a public theatre and meeting space, perhaps in the historic Howe Hall, would enrich the resources available to the community.

B. Provide housing and services for people with developmental and physical disabilities

We foresee creating or maintaining a range of housing types including fully supported housing, and assisted living group homes for people with developmental and severe physical disabilities. Unmet needs for hospice care could also be a part of the re-use plan. We foresee the development happening in stages, which could enable current residents and staff to remain on site continuously.

C. Preserve and restore shelter beds for homeless and transitioning families

The site, until recently, was home to 67 shelter beds for homeless families operated by Middlesex Human Service Agency. The remaining families still benefit not only from the shelter itself, but from other services provided by MHSA to support adults and children in regaining self-sufficiency. We envision the continued operation of these shelter beds with all of the added services that families currently receive.

D. Emergency and Transitional Housing for Women Veterans:

Currently, on any given night, there are an estimated 131,000 homeless veterans in this country. The VA estimates that about ten percent of homeless veterans are women, or, about 13,000. Women veterans are four times as likely to become homeless as their civilian counterparts. Of 500 veterans' shelters, about 300 accept women, but only a very few accept veterans with children. Since an estimated 20 percent of the women who access the VA health care system screen positive for what is called Military Sexual Trauma - i.e., rape or sexual harassment by fellow soldiers – the solution is not to simply house these women in facilities that run programs focused on men. The Fernald campus provides an opportunity to include emergency and transitional housing for women veterans, and to establish partnerships with local programs to not only support them and their children, but to heal and renew them.

E. Build a new model of an ecosystem of complementary enterprises and community services:

The site's existing services provide an opportunity for innovative economic development and land use that would be inclusive to people with intellectual and other disabilities as well as other residents whether they live on or off-site. Potential ideas should focus on real job possibilities or on the job training as opposed to setting up an isolated workshop or training center.

2. Creation of New Mixed Income Housing

A. Utilize a clustered housing model to expand open space areas

Applying sustainable growth principles to housing development for the Fernald site would include planning for clustered housing development. The typical suburban formula of creating open space through large lots with well-separated homes is inefficient. Clustering homes within the development zones of the parcel would allow for housing development while preserving open space. It is well documented that open space set-asides increase land values more when the housing is clustered rather than spread throughout the greenspace as is common in the typical suburban development. Waltham's zoning supports this concept with Section 8.2, Planned

individual reformers who founded Fernald by incorporating their names into the site, through renaming the roads, buildings, and parks, being cautious however due to some of the less desirable legacies of some key people in the history of the institution. Perhaps one of the buildings could house a small exhibition of the history of the site, to acknowledge the positive and negative history of the institution.

B. Adaptively reuse historic buildings

One of the key ideas of the Commonwealth's Smart Growth Principles is the concept of "redevelop first," that we should seek to rehabilitate existing structures rather than build new entities. Adaptive reuse provides the impetus to rehabilitate and adapt the older buildings that are no longer needed for the use for which they were first built. Adaptive re-use would rehabilitate the buildings which could be rehabbed thoroughly, while others which could not sustain a full rehabilitation could support part of a new building, thus preserving the character of the campus through the facades of the buildings. There are several buildings on the campus that can be converted to active use and that should be preserved, particularly those built during and before the 1920's and 1930's, including those designed by important architects such as William G. Preston, the original Trapelo Road houses, and other historic structures that have been renovated already in the last several years.

C. Maintain a campus-like community that does not disturb natural features

The Queen Anne buildings have been sensitively placed on the fabric of the center. Sight lines were carefully considered so that the natural light would enhance the buildings. The human scale of the buildings made many of them warm and welcoming. Exits and entrances are staggered so that there is no place that seems congested. William Preston used red brick, slate roofs and extensive copper gutters and downspouts to outline his buildings. Some of the newer buildings size, shape and placement disturb the studied calm which the original architect intended.

D. Reinstitution of agricultural use

Farming has always been a part of the landscape of Waltham. In fact, aerial views of the Fernald property show the rows of produce that were once grown there. The historical land that has since lain fallow, can be reclaimed and turned back into a working agriculture operation which produces food for consumption, while creating a sense of community. Growing food can create a beautiful landscape and also provides ecological benefits to the land and water supply. There are vernal pools that are located near the back edge of The Fernald Property. By operating an ecological sensitive agriculture on the Fernald land, it is expected that this will prevent further contamination of the waterways that exist on the property. Farming maintains open space while also being productive. The University of Massachusetts has operated an Agriculture Extension for many years, on land that was once farmed by the Warren family on nearby Beaver Street. Cornelia Warren donated the land to be used for educational purposes, much of the land, near the Girl Scout camp, also abuts Fernald.

4. Restoration of a Brownfield and General Environmental Preservation

A. Reclaim land and buildings that are unused because of contamination

barbershops and hairdressers, restaurants and pubs, coffee shops, “green” dry cleaners, laundromats and bookstores. We also envision a branch of the public library, or a bookmobile that would provide access to some library services. The retail establishments would give Fernald the charm of a small, self-contained neighborhood.

C. Create public meeting space and civic activities

An important component of the non-residential space is the creation of a public meeting space, perhaps housed in Howe Hall. This space could be used for meetings of Fernald residents, such as members of local tenants associations or condominium boards, or for parties or events of the general public. Such a facility could offer tours of the Fernald Center’s historic buildings and host an exhibit on the site’s history and re-use. Other ideas along this vein include theatre space, an amphitheatre, and space for rotating art exhibits. Such a facility could also be used for summer day camp or for after school programs for children and teens.

6. Expansion of Waltham’s Open Space and the Western Greenway

A. Remove buildings to significantly widen and preserve open space corridors

Several waves of development on the site of the Fernald Center have eroded the buffers of open space the campus originally enjoyed. A careful study of the buildings on the site will identify those that should be removed in order to provide more open space and better connectivity of the natural areas. This would expand natural areas for enjoyment by the residents, habitat for local fauna, and the buffer of abutting properties including the University of Massachusetts’ Lawrence Meadow, a sensitive wetland environment, a Girl Scout camp, and the City’s Forest Street Park planned self-guided nature trail.

The proposed Western Greenway, with miles of hiking trails through open space in Lexington, Belmont and Waltham would enjoy a protective easement where it crosses the Fernald site. Without the Fernald link, the proposed circular Greenway would be fragmented. Fortunately, many of the buildings that are currently within the proposed open space set-asides are minor structures that don’t lend themselves to reuse or reinvestment, for example, the “cottages” that sit in a small valley (the “bowl”) on the north side of the campus.

B. Enhance the original design of the campus to highlight natural beauty and provide outdoor recreation

In designing the site for the Fernald Center, landscape architects arranged buildings around the hillocks and valleys of the land. Roads encircle the bases of hills, and specimen trees are located for their fullest development and for our enjoyment. We propose that any development continually enhance these aspects of the campus, which would provide the public with more and better access to outdoor recreation, like playgrounds for young children. We envision the restoration of the wetlands and streams near the “bowl” as well as the creation of new walking and bicycle trails, including some that would guide walkers with educational signs about the surrounding habitat. Open space areas could also include cross-country skiing trails. The creation of a community garden and public parks on site would also enhance open space while providing community centered recreation, like the existing ballpark and soccer field.

We propose to light open spaces with a minimum of light pollution. New lights would be installed on campus only as needed, using fixtures that reduce or eliminate light scatter.

housing, historic preservation, open space preservation and recreation. The City could also use its Affordable Housing Trust Fund and Open Space Acquisition Fund for development, as well as the set aside of Hotel Taxes for open space preservation. We hope that the City uses each of these sources aggressively to help create this community vision.

Glossary of Acronyms

- CDBG: Community Development Block Grant, federal program that provides funds to qualifying municipalities, for development to benefit areas with low-income populations.
- CEDAC: Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation, quasi-public state program to fund community development.
- CHAPA: Citizens Housing and Planning Association. Non-profit umbrella organization supporting and promoting affordable housing and community development activities in Massachusetts.
- DHCD: State's Department of Housing and Community Development.
- DDS: Massachusetts Department of Development Services
- GWARC: Greater Waltham Association of Retarded Citizens, provides community based services for developmentally disabled children and adults in Waltham.
- HOME: Federal "home investment partnership" program to fund affordable housing development
- League of Women Voters: Waltham's chapter of the organization to educate voters and encourage participation in democracy.
- MassHousing: "the state's affordable housing bank", offers below market loans to fund affordable housing development.
- MAPC: Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Quasi-public agency that support, promotes and aids in land use planning in 101 cities and towns in Greater Boston.
- MBTA: Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority, regional transportation authority
- MHP: Massachusetts Housing Partnership, quasi-public state agency that funds the preservation and development of affordable housing.
- MHSA: Middlesex Human Service Agency, non-profit organization.
- MWRA: Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
- OCD: Office of Commonwealth Development. State agency composed of and coordinating work in the departments of Transportation, Housing and Community Development and Environmental Affairs in order to promote sustainable development.
- TNA: Trapelo Neighborhood Association, formed to monitor and influence municipal decision regarding development in northeast Waltham to ensure good local planning and minimum community burden.
- WATCH CDC: Waltham Alliance to Create Housing community development corporation, non-profit grassroots organization to support local residents in creating community change, also provides adult education classes and is an affordable housing developer.
- WLT: Waltham Land Trust, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and preserving Waltham's open space and natural resources.

Fernald Working Group
517 Moody Street
Waltham, MA 02453

December 3, 2009

The Fernald Working Group would like to commend the Fernald Reuse Committee for their tremendous amount of work and progress toward a reuse plan for this extremely important parcel of land. We are excited about the general principles being debated and particularly pleased with many elements of the plan currently being discussed, especially the Western Greenway, which we believe will be the lungs of the community that will eventually be created. We also applaud the buffers provided to neighbors on the north and east of the property, the insistence on reusing fields and buildings whenever possible and including a community and performing arts center, which we believe would be the perfect reuse of Howe Hall.

However, we do have several concerns that we would like to express tonight. First, if any development is to happen at the Fernald improved public transportation to the site is absolutely imperative. It would be very easy for public transportation to connect the Fernald to Waverley Square, downtown Waltham and even Alewife Station in Cambridge. The Reuse Committee must insist that these connections are an integral part of any reuse plan.

We urge the committee to require thorough investigation of the feasibility of diverse renewable energy available on this site. In particular, a meteorological tower to collect data for a one-year period can determine the feasibility of a wind turbine in a significantly more accurate way than the model used thus far by this committee. Based on wind estimates by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), we believe the payback period may be much closer to 10-20 years. Small-scale wind, solar and geothermal should be encouraged as complements to small business and residential buildings as an environmental and economic benefit.

We recommend that the committee consider creating a mixed-use village center as well as a health district. This village center should include services that support DDS residents, populations of homeless individuals and families, returning veterans and their families, and people who work on the site.

The Fernald Working Group strongly believes that new and rehabilitated housing developed on the site should reflect the current demographics of Waltham. According to the City's 2007 Community Development Plan, 54% of Waltham's households rent. Furthermore 46% of Waltham household's earn less than 80% of the Boston median income, meaning that almost half the City's households qualify for low-to-moderate income housing. This data should be updated and serve as a basis for planning future residential units. This site presents a tremendous opportunity to address the very real need for affordable housing for those who already live in our City.

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League of Women Voters of Waltham
Statement Dec 3, 2009

The League of Women Voters of Waltham appreciates the hard work of the Fernald Re-use Committee. However, the Re-use Committee has not yet discussed the issue of traffic.

An older report from Connolly Associates indicated that at that time Trapelo Road was at over 125% of capacity. Waltham is overloaded with traffic on Trapelo Road. The intersections along Trapelo Road are congested and the movement of people into, within, and out of Waltham is a major problem. Development at Fernald will impact the Trapelo Road corridor. There is no more land available to widen the road and increase capacity. How can we reduce the traffic load at this location?

The Mass Highway Department has counted 50,000 cars a day at the intersection of Waverley Oaks Road (RT60) and Trapelo Road. Until there is a complete traffic study regarding the accessibility of the proposed development at Fernald, Waltham is inviting even more traffic congestion. Belmont is considering using traffic calming techniques on its portion of Trapelo Road. What impact will we see in Waltham?

The MBTA has a transportation hub at Waverley Square in Belmont which is about a mile and a quarter from Cherry St (the main entrance of Fernald School). The trackless trolley and the Fitchburg train line carry passengers to Waltham and beyond. There are three 554 morning busses and three evening busses which depart from Waverley Square and go to downtown Waltham, and on to Boston. The 70A bus travels along a short portion of western Trapelo Road and then turns onto Lexington Street, nowhere near the Fernald portion of Trapelo Road. There is no public transit to connect the Fernald Land to the hub in Belmont, the Red Line at Alewife in Cambridge, downtown Waltham, or to Waverley Square in Belmont.

Access to the Fernald Developmental Center is not convenient, reliable, swift or timely. If the Fernald Land is to be redeveloped to serve the needs of the community, then it is vital to make sure that public transportation is part of the plan.

On another subject, it is incumbent on the local officials not to close the door on any potential uses of the land. Stonewalling will accomplish nothing. Rather, Waltham should present a coherent and desirable plan for use of the land, which acknowledges the desire of all parties to the negotiations, and agree to negotiate in good faith to accomplish the best possible resolution to the uses of this large plot of land. The alternative may well be that the city will have No say in the use, and once again have to swallow a very bitter pill of massive development.

Georgie Hallock, LWV Waltham

lwitham@rcn.com

12/3/05

Date: Wed, 02 Dec 2009 07:28:00 -0500

From: <lwitham@rcn.com>

Subject: Reuse questions

To: Lwitham@rcn.com

For Dana:

How soon after the closure of the Fernald Center will DCAM declare the property surplus?

How long will it take, in your estimation, to resolve the problems of telephone connections for Malone Park and the Marquardt Center?

How long do you anticipate that it will take to resolve the problems with the water tower so that the power plant can be closed? Have you located the leak from the tower to the Fernald campus and will the state fix it?

Will all the currently active buildings continue to be heated until the power plant is shut down or will the unoccupied buildings be unheated.

Will electricity still be supplied to the unoccupied buildings and for how long?

*What security will be provided to the campus and
malone Park and Marquardt after closure - How will
surplus action affect this security.*

FWG Testimony 12/3/09

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We recommend that the committee consider creating a mixed-use village center as well as a health district. This village center should include services that support DDS residents, populations of homeless individuals and families, returning veterans and their families, and people who work on the site.

The Fernald Working Group strongly believes that new and rehabilitated housing developed on the site should reflect the current demographics of Waltham. According to the City's 2007 Community Development Plan, 54% of Waltham's households rent. Furthermore 46% of Waltham household's earn less than 80% of the Boston median income, meaning that almost half the City's households qualify for low-to-moderate income housing. This data should be updated and serve as a basis for planning future residential units. This site presents a tremendous opportunity to address the very real need for affordable housing for those who already live in our City.

We applaud the work that the Fernald Reuse Committee has done to protect open space. However, there are two areas that we believe have not received adequate attention.

First, it should be a priority to preserve the view from Owl Hill. Second, there are a number of specimen trees throughout the campus. These trees should be catalogued and preserved.

Again, we thank the Fernald Reuse Committee for the difficult task you have engaged and what you have accomplished to date. We applaud you for hosting this public hearing and look forward to continuing to be involved as your plans continue to develop. What happens at the Fernald is crucial to the future of the entire City of Waltham. It is important to continue to have an open and transparent planning process.



12/3/09

517 MOODY STREET • WALTHAM, MA 02453
781-891-6689 Phone • 781.891.1703 Fax • www.watchcdc.org

TO: Fernald Reuse Committee, c/o Mayor Jeannette McCarthy, Chair
FROM: WATCH CDC/ Erica Schwarz, Executive Director
DATE: December 3, 2009
RE: Testimony with regard to the reuse of the Fernald property

Dear Reuse Committee,

WATCH thanks the Reuse Committee for its tremendous work thus far in creating a plan for reuse of the Fernald site. WATCH members are particularly pleased to have this second opportunity for public input and they've requested that I submit this testimony as the Executive Director.

As a member of the Fernald Working Group, WATCH has long advocated for the Working Group's Vision to take advantage of this incredible resource to meet several community needs such as green space, affordable housing, community space and better transportation.

As Waltham's Community Development Corporation, WATCH has a strong focus on economic development and affordable housing. We are pleased that the Reuse Committee has supported many residents' interest in seeing affordable housing at Fernald. This piece of property, being publicly owned, provides a unique opportunity to make a substantial effort to meet the very real demand for housing that meets the incomes of our Waltham families. In fact, our members' primary interest for Fernald is that any housing developed there reflects the current make-up of the Waltham community. According to the City's 2007 Community Development Plan, 54% of Waltham's households rent. Furthermore 46% of Waltham household's earn less than 80% of the Boston median income, meaning that almost half the City's households qualify for low-to-moderate income housing. Given these facts, we suggest that close to half of the housing on the site should be rental housing and that the mix of housing prices should meet the incomes of current residents, which means that close to half should have prices below market rates.

WATCH supports the Reuse Committee's efforts to make sure the current residents of the Fernald are adequately cared for when the facility is no longer operating the way it does today. The residents currently living there include not only clients of DDS, but also residents of the remaining family shelters at the Fernald, which are home to mothers and children. We strongly urge the Reuse Committee to ensure that these shelters are not closed and do not have their capacity decreased.

With regard to how housing or other uses are developed, WATCH believes first that whenever possible housing should be created from rehabilitating existing buildings; second, new construction or rehabilitation of any type, residential or other, should be built to be as healthy and environmentally sustainable as financially feasible, paying special attention to energy

efficiency, water use and retention, indoor air quality, material selection and future cost savings; and third, housing should be well-designed, but relatively dense and close to the “mixed-use” or “health district” campus village. This would allow for increased green space and provide for a walkable site – these are the kinds of features that make the rest of Waltham so attractive.

WATCH supports small-scale economic development at the Fernald. We like the broadly-defined “health district,” especially the idea that the services and businesses here would be a complement to the Marquadt Center. As the committee goes into more detail about this district, we hope it will continue the theme of complementary businesses and services by making the health district into a village center. There should be some number of small businesses, to provide basic needs, such as milk and bread, for the future residents. There could also be job training in the healthcare field, to provide not only educational opportunities to residents of the shelters, but also a pipeline of employees for the healthcare businesses. A childcare center would be useful for both residents and employees.

Finally, WATCH believes that it is absolutely imperative to insist that reliable public transportation be brought to the site. Fernald should be connected in this way to downtown Waltham, Waverley Square and the Alewife T. This would be an important strategy to offset any increased traffic created by new uses of the property.

WATCH again thanks the Reuse Committee. Our members feel strongly about the importance of this kind of public input and we look forward to future opportunities for the public to stay involved. We are confident as decisions continue to be made that the Reuse Committee will continue to balance potentially negative impacts with the opportunity to address several important community needs and create a truly special community resource on this land.

If all possible outcomes for the Fernald Center were on the table, there is no doubt that the interests of the Waltham community would be best served by turning the campus into an extension of the state's Beaver Brook North reservation across Trapelo Rd. The state would accept responsibility for cleaning up the contaminated site for which it has had stewardship responsibility for over a century. The majority of the buildings would be removed, leaving a few for park purposes and to preserve the historical legacy of the institution. The all-green campus would provide healthful recreation for area residents, habitat and connectivity for wildlife and natural preservation, improved air quality for everyone. There would be no traffic impacts – an actual reduction in traffic over even the small contribution made by the current uses. There would be no added burden on our community services, our schools, our water supply and sewers. From an environmental perspective, there are other, arguably more appropriate places to site commercial uses, affordable housing, institutional development, and energy generation.

This option of course has never been mentioned in these proceedings. To be blunt, the Commonwealth wants cash, City Hall wants zoning control. An all-green plan for the campus, while it might be best for the community, does not satisfy either of these aspirations. So we engage in a process where the ideal is set aside unexplored and compromise informs every step. With clear foresight about this circumstance, the Waltham Land Trust has been engaged in supporting limited uses of the campus that respect our open space mission and accomplish other important community goals: providing for agricultural land, clustered affordable housing, supportive services for the disabled, alternative energy generation, and expanded public transportation.

Even while adopting this pragmatic posture of compromise, we must assert the importance of the preservation and restoration of the natural resources on the Fernald Campus. >>>>

We are surprised to see that the Western Greenway trail has been left off of the map entirely – a public amenity that has been endorsed by both the City and the Commonwealth and to which the land trust had dedicated thousands of volunteer hours. Greenspace on the new Fernald map is limited to “environmental buffers” and the mandated setbacks along waterways and wetlands. The idea of daylighting the abused streams from boundary to boundary has been reduced to short and narrow corridor from the chapel to the powerplant. The preservation of Owl Hill has been forgotten as that quadrant of the campus is ceded to the control of the Shriver Center.

Each of these omissions is a lost opportunity to address important community needs: the Greenway must be a part of the plan for reuse, the preserved open space should be counted in the scores of acres, not a mere dozen, restoration of streams and wetlands should be done to historical conditions, not just to provide a water amenity in the midst of the re-developed core campus. The Waltham Land Trust’s goals are well represented in the process and the product provided by the Fernald Working Group’s efforts ~~at~~ ^{to} address ~~the~~ compromise through consensus-building. We hope the Reuse committee will honor this citizen led planning effort by incorporating the goals and ideas presented in the working group’s vision, and respect the work of the Waltham Land Trust by rejecting efforts to compromise away the essential elements of environmental restoration and open space preservation on the Fernald campus.

12/3/09

Susan Sutherland

71 Ellery Road

Good evening Mayor McCarthy, Councilor Curtin, Fernald Re-Use Committee, and members of the community.

Thank you for welcoming me here to present this letter to you. I submitted this letter to the Fernald Re-Use committee and now welcome the opportunity to share it with you all in person. I hope you will agree that this proposal suggests an opportunity to transform the property into a multi-use site that would benefit our Waltham community and the Commonwealth.

(READ LETTER)

I am here as a resident of Waltham and a parent of a child with an ASD and am very familiar with the Fernald property. I provide graphic design services to the EK Shriver Center for one of their publications, and I'm a member of the Community Advisory Board for a research program Supporting Physical Activity & Recreation in the Community. Over the years our family has been to the Greene Pool and this year it was the

facility the GWARC Swim Team used to practice for the Special Olympics. That's where my son learned how to swim without assistance and competed in the summer events with other children and adults from Massachusetts. He was very proud of the medals he received for his efforts.

I am also here as a representative for those who cannot be here to weigh in on what a multi-purpose campus that addresses the growing concerns around medical, educational, employment and living issues for those living with an autism spectrum disorder would mean to them. And I stand on the shoulders of those parents and professionals that came before me who provided me with a learning experience that led me to this place tonight. I listened to what they had to say about their experiences when the autism prevalence rate was much lower, 1 in 10,000. They prepared me for what I could expect and I was grateful to find people that I could go to with questions and I listened to their advice on ways to help my son experience all that life had to offer. From the doctors, therapists and teachers, I learned how to communicate with my son. From the parents I learned how to cope with a different life. And from my son I learned patience and how to experience the world differently following his lead and adapting to his way of seeing and navigating it.

The Fernald property would be the right setting and the centerpiece of the campus, a medical facility, would be instrumental in bringing together researchers who are off in silos, all together, under one roof or assessable via video technology systems like telemedicine, so they can work collaboratively and get answers or solutions to problems much more quickly. This model would be very efficient if researchers and clinicians were observing the populations they are studying in a more natural setting vs. a busy doctor's office where it can take some patients 15 minutes to transition in and 15 minutes to transition out of a 45 minute doctor's appointment. This facility would also provide jobs in the field of autism research and treatment, and drain the biotechnology and bioengineering sectors.

I've been involved in the world of autism for the past 10 years and I sometimes forget that others have not traveled my path and don't see and hear what I do. So I will tell you there are many people who would benefit from a campus that provides specialized supports in one location. Some would require more intensive services and others on an as needed basis. Employment training and housing are very immediate needs. I know parents who are fast approaching their 80's and are caring for a loved one at home because there isn't housing for them void of the environmental assaults like fire alarms, fluorescent lighting, or door buzzers that prevent

them from living independently in current housing. I know other parents who have created care networks and everyone on the team is involved in the life of the person with ASD and can take over the care if need be. But that is difficult to organize and operate and requires very strong communication goals for everyone on the team.

I know an adult on the autism spectrum who had been gainfully employed for over 6 years, takes public transportation to their job, and could live independently. Only they are cared for at home because of a seizure disorder that would necessitate immediate attention should one arise. Some adults being cared for at home could be trained for jobs, but there are not qualified individuals to conduct training, or the person might be non verbal and have no way of communicating with others because they don't have access to current low or high-technology systems. Many parents wonder what will happen to their loved ones when they are gone and they should be concerned. And so should we. Where would they go?

ASD should be on everyone's radar as 84% of the autism population is under the age of 21 and will one day be in need of many specialized services. Today, medical professionals can diagnose ASD earlier and this is crucial in getting these children early intervention services that can reduce lifelong care by two-thirds. That's great news but there is an immediate need for "late intervention" as these kids age out and are no

longer eligible for education based programs at 22, and parents are not finding adequate programs or services that will continue to stimulate their minds and improve their well being. So many are kept at home and not able to integrate into society. We need to be innovative and think about how to create and provide programs and supports. Waltham has a good PDD education program that uses evidence based teaching methods, and an expanding vocational school that many of these students can move into. We also have organizations that provide community inclusion supports, but funding cuts can change any of this in an instant. The State is looking for input into creative problem solving in human services. I see this as the moment in time where we can create this much needed campus and provide a place with "training wheels" so there is an opportunity for many people to learn and practice life and social skill sets that can then be transferred to other settings and become equipped with the necessary tools to become more independent.

Back when the autism prevalence rate was 1 in 10,000, parents were told they could not expect much promise for their child. Today there are many advances in medical and education research that will change their outcome but more needs to be done. We are faced with a national dilemma that we here in Waltham can address at the local level - and -we

could do so with state and federal support. We could be the national model.

12/3/09

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) should be on everyone's radar as 84% of the autism population is under the age of 21. Many medical professionals can diagnose ASD earlier and this is crucial in getting these children early intervention services that can reduce lifelong care by two-thirds. That's great news but there is an immediate need for "late intervention" as these kids age out and are no longer eligible for education based programs at 22, and parents are not finding adequate programs or services that will continue to stimulate their minds and improve their well being. We need to be innovative and think about how to create and provide programs and supports. Waltham has a good PDD education program that uses evidence based teaching methods, an expanding vocational school that many of these students can move into. We also have have organizations that provide community inclusion supports, but funding cuts can change any of this in an instant. The state is looking for input into creative problem solving in human services. I see this as the moment in time where we can create this campus and provide a place with "training wheels" so there is an opportunity for many people to learn and practice life and social skill sets that can be transferred to other settings and thus become more independent.

The lifetime distribution of the incremental societal costs of autism.

Ganz ML.

Abt Associates Inc, Lexington, MA 02421, USA. mganz@hsph.harvard.edu

OBJECTIVE: To describe the age-specific and lifetime incremental societal costs of autism in the United States. DESIGN: Estimates of use and costs of direct medical and nonmedical care were obtained from a literature review and database analysis. A human capital approach was used to estimate lost productivity. These costs were projected across the life span, and discounted incremental age-specific costs were computed. SETTING: United States. PARTICIPANTS: Hypothetical incident autism cohort born in 2000 and diagnosed in 2003. MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES: Discounted per capita incremental societal costs. RESULTS: The lifetime per capita incremental societal cost of autism is \$3.2 million. Lost productivity and adult care are the largest components of costs. The distribution of costs over the life span varies by cost category. CONCLUSIONS: Although autism is typically thought of as a disorder of childhood, its costs can be felt well into adulthood. The substantial costs resulting from adult care and lost productivity of both individuals with autism and their parents have important implications for those aging members of the baby boom generation approaching retirement, including large financial burdens affecting not only those families but also potentially society in general. These results may imply that physicians and other care professionals should consider recommending that parents of children with autism seek financial counseling to help plan for the transition into adulthood.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17404130>

Could biotech save the state?

Sun Nov 29 2009 00:00:00 GMT-0500 (EST)

In 2008, the Massachusetts Legislature approved the Life Sciences Act, a 10-year, \$1 billion initiative that promised to bring biotechnology companies and jobs to the state, building on an industry already at the nucleus of the state's high-tech economy.

CONTINUES: <http://www.dailynewstribune.com/archive/x1297505491/Could-biotech-save-the-state>

MGH to target adult autism

\$29m gift will fund specialized program

By [Liz Kowalczyk](#) Globe Staff / August 23, 2009 Massachusetts General Hospital is creating one of the first comprehensive programs in the nation to provide specialized medical care to adults with autism, a group whose numbers are poised to surge as tens of thousands of children diagnosed with the developmental disorder grow up. The hospital plans to announce Tuesday that it will receive \$29 million, the fourth- largest gift in its history, from Nancy Lurie Marks and her family foundation in Wellesley, in part to add a major adult component to its pediatric autism program. The money will also allow the hospital to expand its services for children with autism, who now wait up to a year for an appointment, conduct extensive research, advocate for patients, and train physicians. Foundation staff and autism specialists said many physicians are hesitant or unsure how to talk to and examine adult autistic patients. Their behavior can include rocking and repeating stock phrases - or not speaking at all - and that can lead to serious gaps in care and an over-reliance on psychiatric medications. Autism "is treated as a childhood disorder but it's lifelong," said Clarence Schutt, director of the Wellesley foundation, which is a leading funder of autism research and whose grant to Mass. General is its largest ever.

CONTINUES: http://www.boston.com/news/health/articles/2009/08/23/mgh_to_target_adult_autism/

\$29 Million Gift Addresses Growing Autistic Population

Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation will fund multidisciplinary center to provide diagnosis, research, and treatments for a complex disorder

BOSTON – Imagine you are the parent of a young child exhibiting the bewildering and often difficult signs of autism, yet you are unable to obtain an early diagnosis and gain access to promising treatment options for your child because of year-long wait lists to see knowledgeable and experienced clinicians.

Or you are an adult with autism and your family cannot find a medical and therapeutic team with the training and expertise to handle the lifelong needs of a maturing individual with autism. And like so many children and adults with autism, you and your family have nowhere to turn to learn about new therapeutic developments that might help you to communicate and cope better with your unique physical, sensory and behavioral challenges – all of which are important for creating meaningful engagement with school, family and friends.

CONTINUES: <http://www.nlmfoundation.org/MGHLEACPressRelease.htm>

MGHFC NLMF/LADDERS Program Website

<http://www.massgeneral.org/children/specialtiesandservices/ladders/default.aspx>

Adults With Autism

November 21, 2007 9:23 AM

Most programs for people with autism are geared toward children. But as these children age, the issue of how to help adults living with autism becomes much more clear. Maggie Rodriguez reports.

Adults with Autism ([Watch the CBS news story here.](#)) The lead remark in the story was, "The adult population with autism is about to explode." Reporter Maggie Rodriguez announced, "It's only a matter of time before we're facing a crisis in adult services. There may not be enough work to go around." Even Alison Singer bemoaned the fact that "there's going to be a tidal wave of people with autism. We are not ready for that. We as a society are not ready to embrace the one in 150 people who are going to need adult services." Singer and her entire family are concerned about the future for her autistic daughter. Gary Mesibov director of TEACCH at the U of NC added, "I don't think anyone at this point can meet this dramatic increase."

WATCH SEGMENT VIDEO <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=3530155n>

Autistic and Overlooked

By Linda H. Davis

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

As people around the globe acknowledge World Autism Awareness Day today – proclaimed by the U.N. General Assembly last December – it is important to consider an aspect of this devastating disorder that has been curiously and persistently neglected: the lifelong care of autistic adults.

CONTINUES <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/01/AR2008040102199.html>

Prepare to care for a huge number of autistic adults By Linda Davis The Washington Post April 07, 2009 - 12:00 am

Question: What coming social expenditure will cost more than a third of this year's budget for the Department of Health and Human Services and be larger than the entire current budget of the Energy Department?

Answer: The bill for the tide of autistic children entering adulthood over the next 15 years, an estimated \$27 billion annually in current, non-inflation-adjusted dollars by the end of that period. The number of autistic children expected to need extensive adult services by 2023 - more than 380,000 people - is roughly equal to the population of Minneapolis. If a town were created to house this group of people and their caregivers - for you can't separate the two - it would exceed the population of all but six

CONTINUES: <http://www.concordmonitor.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090407/OPINION/904070328/1028/OPINION0>

Linda Davis is the co-founder of SAGE Crossing

The SAGE Crossing Foundation was begun in February, 2007, for the purpose of creating a green-model Massachusetts farmstead for autistic adults. SAGE was conceived as a template that can and should be reproduced on small farms and orchards throughout Massachusetts and the United States. The foundation was officially approved as a Massachusetts not-for-profit corporation on April 6, 2007, and received its Federal Tax-exemption as a 501(c)(3) organization on September 14, 2007.

CONTINUES: <http://www.sagecrossingfoundation.org/about.shtml>

Bittersweet Farms sows inspiration Lucas County autism facility serves as model

By GABE NELSON BLADE STAFF WRITER On an idyllic spring morning near Whitehouse, the farmers were up and about. One rode a mower across a pasture. Another chopped wood: fragrant cedar and oak. Others were in the stable, tending to and playing with the animals.

It was another day at Bittersweet Farms, a care center for autistic adults and teenagers that has become one of the most influential in the world.

CONTINUES: <http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080601/NEWS17/806010311>

Wellesley bus firm is autism group's Employer of Year

By Elana Zak/Townsmen staff

GateHouse News Service

Posted May 15, 2009 @ 09:51 AM

Last update May 20, 2009 @ 12:52 PM

Wellesley —

When clients of the Wellesley-based [Autism Services Association](#) leave their shift at the Eastern Bus Company, they know they did more than simply clean a bus.

"It's been great for our people to have that work opportunity," said Joel Smith, ASA's executive director. "It gives them a lot of self confidence and a lot of self esteem. It makes them feel like a member of the community."

CONTINUES: <http://www.wickedlocal.com/wellesley/news/business/x1518879171/Wellesley-bus-firm-is-autism-group-s-Employer-of-Year>

Better, faster... and no office politics: the company with the autistic specialists

A pioneering company in Denmark is giving people with autism the chance to apply their skills to jobs from IT to product testing. The result is a huge success that's about to be rolled out across Europe. Founder Thorkil Sonne tells Michael Booth how his workforce's superhuman recall and unflinching focus could teach the rest of us a thing or two

CONTINUES <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/features/better-faster-and-no-office-politics-the-company-with-the-autistic-specialists-1693057.html>

Cape couple develop practical applications for iPhone

By Sarah Shemkus

sshemkus@capecodonline.com

August 18, 2009

MARSTONS MILLS — Around the time Graham Johnson turned 2, his parents Lisa and Jeff began to suspect that he was having developmental delays and anxiety problems.

The year that followed was full of appointments with specialists and conversations with the school district about appropriate placement for Graham.

But now, the Johnsons have turned their yearlong struggle into a budding business, developing and selling iPhone applications intended to help autistic and developmentally delayed children.

"We thought, 'We know it can help, and we can do it. So let's do it,'" Lisa Johnson said.

Lisa, a physical therapist, and Jeff, a software developer and iPhone enthusiast, sat down at their kitchen table and brainstormed.

One of the communication tools they had found most useful in working with their son was storyboards — using a series of pictures to explain plans or ask questions.

CONTINUES: <http://www.capecodonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090818/BIZ/908180301>

Record Number Of Researchers, Advocates, Parents Drawn To Autism Consortium Symposium For Autism Update

Main Category: [Autism](#) Also Included In: [Genetics](#) Article Date: 06 Nov 2009 - 5:00 PST The Autism Consortium, an innovative collaboration of researchers, clinicians, funders and families dedicated to catalyzing research and enhancing clinical care for [autism](#) spectrum disorders (ASDs), held its fourth annual symposium on October 28th, 2009, at Harvard Medical School in Boston. The meeting gave scientists, clinicians, advocates and parents an opportunity to gather for the latest information on causes of autism and their implications for diagnosis, prognosis and therapies for people with autism spectrum disorders.

CONTINUES: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/170151.php>

Diet, Activity and Obesity in Children with Autism (funded by NICHD; R21-HD048989)

Obesity has become a significant health concern in children, given its high and increasing prevalence. It is well accepted that obesity is the result of an energy imbalance, however, factors that are associated with obesity in children with autism may be different than those of their typically developing peers. The implications of the persistence of obesity in this population are significant, as the demands of managing the associated medical consequences would likely limit individuals' choices for independent living in the community. Our preliminary studies suggest that children with developmental disabilities are at the same risk for obesity than typically developing (normal) children. Children with autism appear to represent a unique group whose atypical eating patterns and reduced opportunities for physical activity due to social or recreational limitations may be associated with the development of obesity.

CONTINUES: <http://www.umassmed.edu/shriver/Service/communityFamilyServices/Health.aspx>

Adolescents and Adults with Autism: A Study of Family Caregiving

Marty Wyngaarden Krauss

Brandeis University Office of the Provost

www.brandeis.edu/provost/krauss/CV_Krauss.pdf

Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts (AFAM)

Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts (AFAM), the autism community's grassroots advocacy organization has designated its Budgetary and Legislative priorities for the coming fiscal year. AFAM will continue to advocate vigorously for the enactment of these priorities by our State legislature.

AFAM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

An Act Relative to Insurance Coverage for Autism (H. 3809) Lead Sponsors: Rep. L'Italien, Sen. Berry This bill requires health insurers in Massachusetts to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder, which currently affects 1 in every 150 children. It includes habilitative or rehabilitative care, pharmacy care, psychiatric care, psychological care and therapeutic care prescribed, provided, or ordered for an individual diagnosed with ASD by a licensed physician or a licensed psychologist who determines care to be medically necessary. Treatments include testing to diagnose autism, structured behavioral therapies including ABA, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy provided by certified or licensed providers. The proposed legislation does not limit the amount of coverage and has no age limit. To date, there are more than 110 co-sponsors of this legislation, representing a majority of the Massachusetts legislature.

An Act Relative to Improve Teacher Training in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (S. 223)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Creem, Rep. Bradley This bill will help to ensure that teachers receive training in augmentative and alternative communication methods necessary to educate children with disabilities who are nonverbal or who have limited speech. Thousands of children who are nonverbal or have limited speech (including children with ASD) rely on augmentative and alternative communication methods to interact with others, and many students are now being included in regular education. The bill directs the Board of Education to revise regulations for educator licensure so that all teachers are adequately prepared in methods of communication other than speech to facilitate interaction and inclusion and to ensure access to the general education curriculum.

An Act Addressing Bullying of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (H. 3804) Lead Sponsors: Rep.

L'Italien, Sen. Jehlen This bill amends the Autism IEP Act to clarify that IEP Teams must address bullying of children with autism. Children on the autism spectrum are frequently victims of bullying, teasing, and harassment as a result of their disability. Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are especially vulnerable targets for bullying because they are sometimes viewed as atypical or "odd" by some of their peers, and are relatively defenseless. These children are unable to understand and protect themselves like other students due to the nature of ASD, which impacts communication, social, and behavioral skills. Because their disability deprives children with autism of the natural ability to understand signals, communicate and to protect themselves, these students require teaching, supports, and services to develop strategies to help deal with bullying. This bill ensures that these supports are provided, as appropriate, to address the needs of the individual child, through the IEP process.

CONTINUES: <http://www.afamaction.org/leg08.html>

The California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism

The Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism was established by the California Legislature in 2005 without a single dissenting vote. The resolution creating it received strong bipartisan support. Its goal is to have direct impact on the needs of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. Authored by [Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata](#) (D-Oakland) and supported by [Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez](#) (D-Los Angeles), the resolution (SCR 51), creates a sixteen member Commission representing parents of children with autism, the public and private sector, educators, physicians, and public health officials.

Press Releases: <http://senweb03.senate.ca.gov/autism/pressrelease.html>

[CASenDems](#) April 28, 2009

Senate President pro Tem Steinberg Announces Senate Select Committee on Autism & Related Disorders, Highlights Senate Bill Package <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzj8a1jyMg>