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Speaking Out for the Past and Present Fernald Center Residents

August 4, 2009

Date: August 5, 2009

Subject: **The Fernald Village**  
Fernald Reuse Proposal Presentation

Place: Waltham City Hall  
610 Main Street  
Waltham, Massachusetts 02452

Members of the reuse subcommittee, I am George Mavridis. I was the Fernald League President from 1989 to 2003 with a two year break from 1994 to 1996 when I was the president of COFAR. COFAR is the statewide affiliation of the Fernald League and other advocacy organizations that believe individuals with mental retardation should have the option to live in the least restrictive environment; and in some cases that choice is an intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded like Fernald as regulated by the Social Security Act Title XIX.

The Fernald League's primary objective in proposing the **Fernald Village** is to keep the Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs/MR) open to give individuals with mental retardation the same options to decide where to call 'home' as other United States citizens.

Most citizens have many living options, such as living at home with their parents, or living in an apartment or in a single family house, or in a condominium; and in later years, maybe in an assisted living facility or a skilled nursing facility. I live in a retirement community which meets all the Social Security Act Title XIX requirements. My Cousin Joanna lived at Fernald for 39-years; and since 2005 she lives in a state-

operated duplex in Lynnfield which only meets the Title XIX waiver requirements.

In 2004, working as President of the Walter E. Fernald Corporation, which opened the Fernald Center in 1848 with a grant from the Great and General Court (Land was purchased in Waltham in 1887 and the facility was moved by 1890), I discussed the idea of locating a smaller footprint for the Fernald Center in the western corner of the property, adjacent to four townhouse buildings known as Malone Park. These four houses were built in 1971 and dedicated as a memorial by Adele Malone to her late husband, Charles.

I discussed my proposal with a local contractor and a major consulting engineering firm in Boston and both liked the idea. The consulting firm had done most of the site work for the modern Fernald campus during the late 1970's, under the authorization of United States District Court Judge Joseph Tauro. However Gerald Morrissey, Commissioner of the then Department of Mental Retardation (now the Department of Developmental Services), denied me permission in 2004 to bring the consultant firm onto the property to formally assess my idea. I asked the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM), for a copy of the consultant's original drawings and was refused. I looked through some old drawings that we had at the Fernald League and pieced two drawings together to form a plot plan for the Fernald Campus. These plot plans are part of my presentation.

Since 2004, I have discussed my idea with former Commissioner Morrissey and current DDS Commissioner Elin Howe, but did not receive their support for it. In fact, it does not appear that either commissioner ever seriously considered the development of a smaller footprint for the Fernald Center as an alternative to closing the facility. In 2004, we envisioned the development of a smaller intermediate care facility that would house 300 individuals because that was the number of Fernald residents living there when former Governor Romney made his proposal to close Fernald in February 2003. Three hundred Fernald residents do not need 187 acres of land and no one, least of all the Fernald League and COFAR families, wants to see Fernald grow to its former size in the 1960s. That number of residents is now down to about 140.

My sole intention in 2004 was the construction of a smaller Fernald, The Fernald Village, to be built while the residents remained on the campus. We have also referred to this as a "postage-stamp" proposal.

My proposal was as follows:

The Department of Developmental Services would declare the majority of the Fernald property as surplus and the Commonwealth would decide to sell that majority portion of

the Fernald campus to a developer. The sale price for that portion of the Fernald campus would be a combination barter and money transaction:

1. The successful developer would pay cash for the land that was not needed for the continued operation of the smaller Fernald Developmental Center or Fernald Village.
2. The developer would remove abandoned and unneeded buildings on the campus, and build cost-efficient group homes or other residential housing needed for current residents.
3. The successful developer would provide the necessary heating systems (including all the engineering) to supply heat and hot water to the Fernald Village and possibly the Shriver Research Center, which today is a part of the UMASS Medical Center and is independent of Fernald.
4. The successful developer would be the provider contractor for all the support services needed by the Department of Developmental Services to operate the Fernald Center.

Many mentally retarded people are awaiting DDS services. These include “Turning 22” individuals, who are leaving special education services in their public schools, and those on waiting lists, who are currently living in family homes or nursing homes. Hospice and respite care for many of these people could readily be provided by the Marquardt Skilled Nursing Facility on the Fernald campus in conjunction with the Medical Clinic and residential space in the Village at Fernald. Under our proposal, the Fernald Center would continue to provide clinical, dental, medical, and recreational services to both its own residents and community-based clients of DDS. The Fernald Center would moreover operate as a partner in both the greater Waltham community and the community that is developed at the Fernald campus site.

In 2009, we look forward to a dynamic working relationship with persons who agree that evicting the current residents of Fernald from their community of peers and staff is life threatening and unacceptable.

We believe this is a win - win proposition. The present Fernald residents would retain their homes, work sites and level of care; the majority of the campus would become a site for positive economic development in Waltham; most of the current Fernald staff, who live in the Waltham area, would have continued employment near their homes.

We would like to call to your attention to the fact that when the Department of Developmental services closes the Fernald Center, the only money saved will be due to the closure of the Fernald power plant and the buildings that it serves. The operation of the power plant, however, is a relatively small part of the Fernald budget, most of which goes toward the salaries of direct-care, clinical, and other staff at the facility. My proposal, by the way, would also involve the closure of the Fernald power plant and its replacement with a cost-effective heating and hot-water system, as noted above.

For philosophical reasons, which we in the Fernald League and COFAR oppose, the Department of Developmental Services does not want to maintain state facilities that meet the Title XIX level of care. Instead, the Department prefers to provide community-based services under a waiver of the Title XIX regulations.

As part of its Fernald closure plan, the Department of Developmental Services proposes to keep 24 residents living in the four Malone Park buildings, which currently have their own heating system. Malone Park houses will be reclassified as community houses operated by the DDS Metro Boston Residential Service Agency under the home and community based waiver of Title XIX. Once the Fernald Center closes, these 24 people will be living three quarters of a mile from the nearest neighbor at the corner of Trapelo Road and Oakledge Road. They will be located over a half mile down Malone Street, a one-lane, dead-end street. So much for community integration.

To maintain at least this level of care, we would support the construction of several 4-bedroom houses to be managed by the Waltham Housing Authority and staffed by state employees and operated as state-operated group homes under the Title XIX waiver for home and community based services.

This second version of the **Fernald Village** concept would be a win – win situation also. The state would have some houses in the Waltham area for individuals with mental retardation; some of the Fernald residents would have a housing option in Waltham, close to the homes of their guardians; some Fernald staff, who live in the Waltham area would have continued employment near their homes.

Attached are three drawings that we produced. The first drawing shows the Fernald Center today with the buildings color-coded based on their usage. We have indicated the buildings that provide services to community residents. For example 90% of the Tufts Dental Clinic patients live in the community and not at Fernald. Ninety percent of the swimmers in the Duhamel Therapeutic Swimming Pool live in the Waltham community, and 90% of the Greene Gym and the ball field's usage is by community residents, and none of them are mentally retarded.

The second drawing shows our proposed new intermediate care facility for 300 residents (or the number currently remaining at Fernald), which would be located in the west corner near the Malone Park townhouses. We propose constructing a small utility building on the south side of the Greene Building to serve the Greene Building and the Chapel of the Holy Innocents. The Marquardt Skilled Nursing Facility will also require a small utility addition. We propose relocating the Tufts Dental facility into the Greene Building and maintaining and expanding the recreational features of Greene. Other buildings, which we recommend for demolition and the land that would be developed for uses compatible with the Trapelo Road neighborhood, are shown without the color fill. The Division Capital Asset Management or a developer should evaluate these buildings before they are demolished. The Commonwealth can redevelop this section of the Fernald campus for other state uses or declare the land surplus and sell it. The Commonwealth can sell this east portion of the Fernald land to the City of Waltham or to a developer, without having to evict the remaining Fernald residents. It would be a win-win result!










The third drawing shows our proposed new state-operated group houses in the Malone Park area. Again we would construct a utility building for the Greene Building, the Chapel of the Holy Innocents and the Marquardt Skilled Nursing Facility. Relocation of the Tufts Dental Clinic and expansion of the recreational features of the Greene building would also be part of this proposal. Another win-win result!

In conclusion, we believe that with the help of all participating stakeholders, a viable plan can and should be produced that will allow for both the development of the vast majority of the Fernald campus and the continued existence of a scaled-down version of the Fernald Developmental Center on a portion of the campus. We think our proposals are both viable and cost-effective, and that it points the way toward the future not only of the current campus, but of the care for mentally retarded persons in Massachusetts and around the nation.

Sincerely,

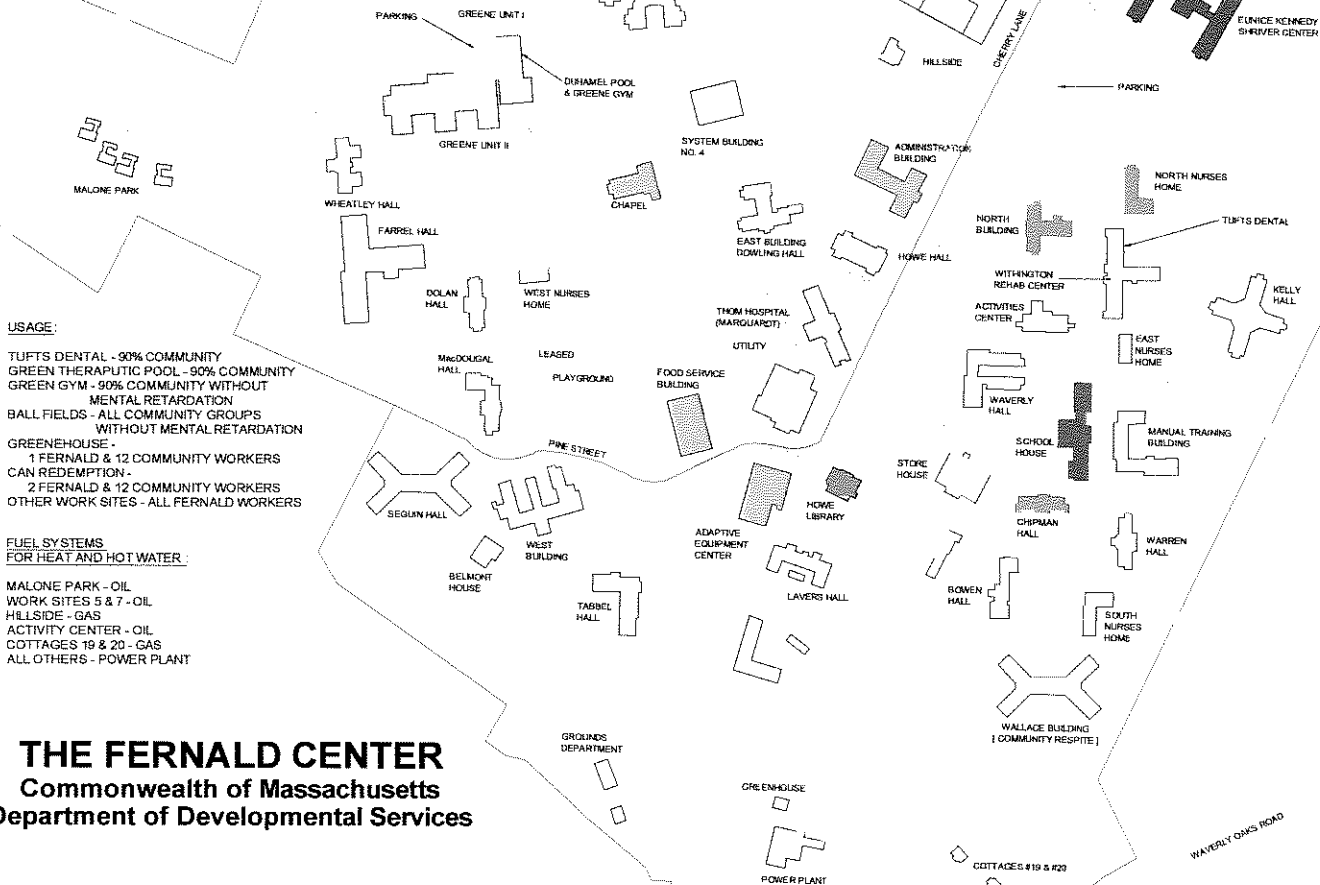
George Mavridis,  
Former President  
Fernald League

**COLOR KEY:**

-  RESIDENCES
-  ABANDONED
-  LEASED
-  METRO BOSTON REGION  
MIDDLESEX HUMAN  
SERVICE AGENCY
-  CLOSED, RENOVATED  
EASILY REOPENED
-  DAY PROGRAM WORK SITES
-  LEASED
-  SHRIVER  
FERNALD ASSOCIATION  
FERNALD LEAGUE  
TUFTS DENTAL
-  SUPPORT BUILDINGS










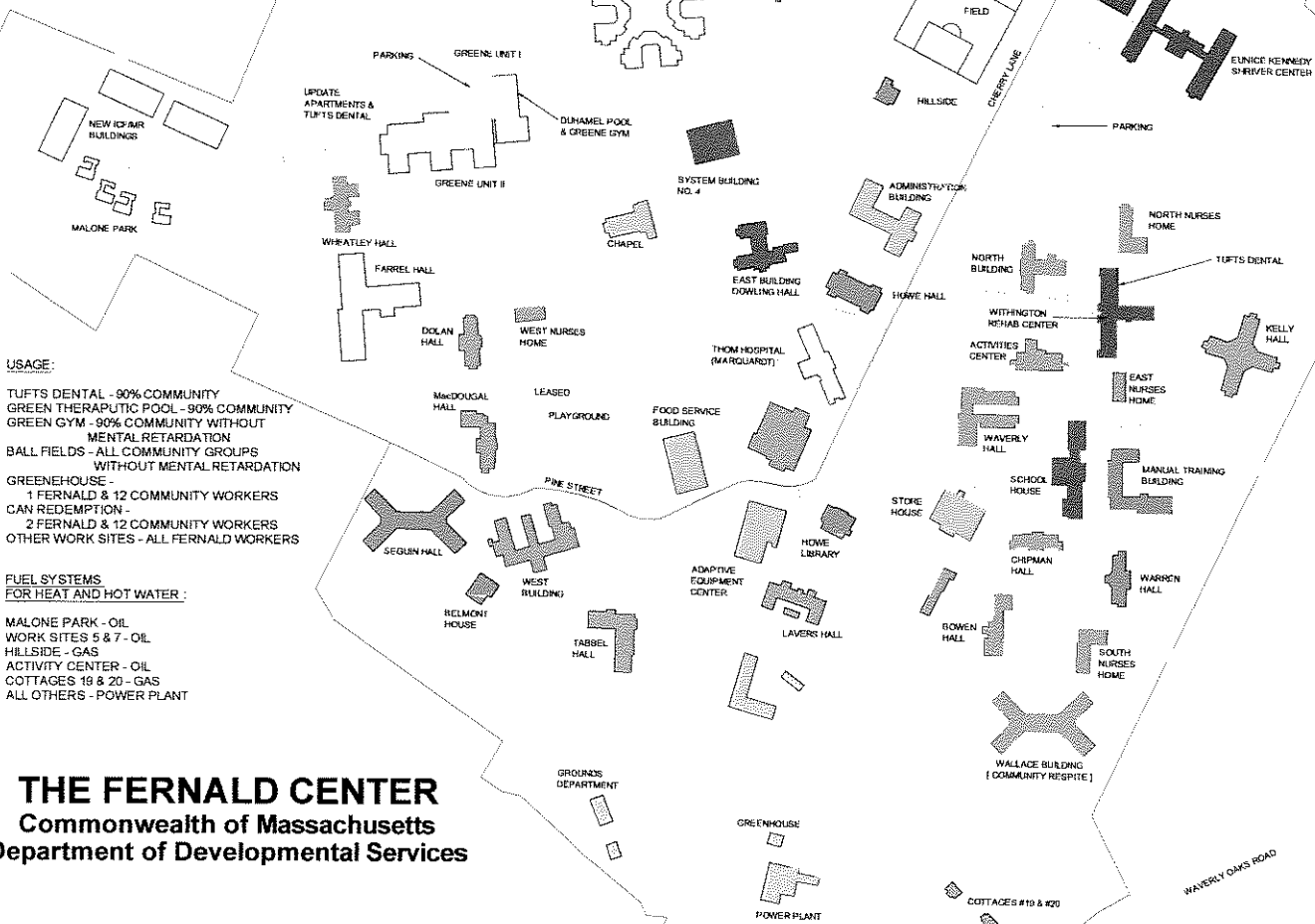
**PRESENT CAMPUS**



# **FERNALD VILLAGE PRESENT CAMPUS INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITY FOR 300 INDIVIDUALS**

## **COLOR KEY:**

-  RESIDENCES
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-  LEASED  
METRO BOSTON REGION  
MIDDLESEX HUMAN  
SERVICE AGENCY
-  CLOSED, RENOVATED  
EASILY REOPENED
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-  LEASED  
SHRIVER  
FERNALD ASSOCIATION  
FERNALD LEAGUE  
TUFTS DENTAL
-  SUPPORT BUILDINGS



## **USAGE:**








TUFTS DENTAL - 90% COMMUNITY  
GREEN THERAPUTIC POOL - 90% COMMUNITY  
GREEN GYM - 90% COMMUNITY WITHOUT  
MENTAL RETARDATION  
BALL FIELDS - ALL COMMUNITY GROUPS  
WITHOUT MENTAL RETARDATION  
GREENHOUSE -  
1 FERNALD & 12 COMMUNITY WORKERS  
CAN REDEMPTION -  
2 FERNALD & 12 COMMUNITY WORKERS  
OTHER WORK SITES - ALL FERNALD WORKERS

## **FUEL SYSTEMS FOR HEAT AND HOT WATER :**

MALONE PARK - OIL  
WORK SITES 5 & 7 - OIL  
HILLSIDE - GAS  
ACTIVITY CENTER - OIL  
COTTAGES 19 & 20 - GAS  
ALL OTHERS - POWER PLANT

**THE FERNALD CENTER**  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Developmental Services

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-  SUPPORT BUILDINGS



# **FERNALD VILLAGE STATE OPERATED GROUP HOUSES**

