

Fernald Reuse Committee  
c/o Mayor's Office  
Waltham City Hall  
610 Main Street  
Waltham, MA 02452



August 12, 2009

Dear Mr. Joe Vizard and Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy:

I am writing to follow up after our presentation on August 5, 2009 to members of the Fernald Reuse Committee and the Reuse Intake Sub-Committee regarding the exciting potential of using some of the Fernald Center land for farming. Our understanding is that you wanted confirmation and reiteration from all proposals for various future uses of the Center land before your next regularly-scheduled meeting on Wednesday, August 12.

Generally speaking, and focusing on the three consistent questions you asked all interested parties to enumerate, we propose, subject to final approval of our Board of Directors, the following:

Location - This would be determined through further collaboration and study of the soil conditions and quality and the best use of the balance of the property. We have attempted to contact Nick Tsaparlis at DCAM to engage in this process. While we can't currently identify a specific location, we feel that a parcel or parcel(s) totaling approximately 20 acres would be appropriate for the community's interest and needs. Any land that has been previously farmed should warrant special consideration, as well as other land that is currently open space and not occupied by buildings. We would also be willing to purchase or lease several existing buildings, again upon recommendation of the best-suited facilities by DCAM or its consultants, and renovate them to meet prevailing energy efficiency standards. The uses of these buildings would be for: offices (5 to 7 people) and conference room, residential housing for year-round and seasonal staff (6-8 apartments), storage for equipment and tools (1-3,000 square feet), educational programming space (possibly in cooperation with other Center facilities that may remain, including the current library and auditorium), a farm store (750-1,000 square feet), and refrigerated storage space for vegetables, fruits, and other food items.

Cost and other funding considerations - We would prefer leasing the farmland and the buildings from the eventual owner on a long-term basis, equivalent to virtually permanent occupancy. Should this arrangement be impractical or inappropriate, we would consider purchasing the land and buildings outright. Since neither the specific land to be farmed nor the buildings we would need have been identified or appraised, it is impossible to estimate the value of any lease or purchase price. We would bear the

capital expenses involving in returning any cleared land to farming production (assuming no extraordinary or toxic clean-up costs), renovating the several buildings described above, or any equipment and personnel needed to operate the farm, educational programming, hunger relief work, the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), or our farmer training program.

Timing - We are willing and able to act promptly, within 6 to 12 months, with regard to the renovation of the land and buildings generally described above. If any significant outlay of funds for the purchase of any land or buildings will be necessary, we would request that payment of these funds be deferred for 3-5 years for the completion of a capital funds drive. This is not to say that we would not be interested and willing to lease any of these assets pending an ultimate purchase.

Other things we'd like to stress as you consider the various recommendation for use of the Fernald Center land and buildings.

If one block of approximately 20 acres was not available or feasible, we would consider several different parcels, not less than six acres and, again, assuming that they were not toxic and were reasonably level.

We would encourage the Commonwealth, the City, or whatever entity becomes the permanent owner, to permanently restrict the land that is designated for farming. This is a unique opportunity to preserve some property for farming forever; very few communities in Eastern Massachusetts, especially inside the 128/95 loop, can boast of such a great asset for their citizens.

Our organization is not only involved in farming production --a non-profit CSA model -- but we are also committed to giving a substantial portion of our output away to hunger relief and food security entities who serve the area's under-resourced population, providing education to the school-aged and general population about food and the advantages of producing food locally, and to continuing to advance the cause of training new farmers.

As a CSA, we sell shares to families who come to the farm each week, starting in May, for about 20 weeks, to pick up a wide variety of the farm's produce. These shareholders actually participate in the risk (and rewards) of the annual crop output. While this is a model we intend to expand at the Fernald cite, the additional land will also enable us to a) give more vegetables away free to those who need them, and also to 2) build and operate a farm store at the property so that non-shareholders will be able to buy vegetables directly from "their" local farm.

The Fernald farmland would be an expansion, not a replacement for the land we currently occupy at the UMass Field Station land on Beaver Street. Since our CSA sells out very quickly and our hunger-relief, social-service agency partners represent a growing number of needy people, our expansion is vital to the changing needs of the City of Waltham and the other communities we serve.

We also want to emphasize that farming, particularly in a responsive, nonprofit community farm sense, is a perfect dovetail with other uses of the property, particularly residential, conservation, human service, and even commercial. We are very excited about the possibility of being part of a comprehensive, mixed-use revitalization of the Fernald property.

We are a stable, experienced, non-profit organization with a proven track record in organic, non-profit, farming and community service. Our involvement in the future of the Fernald site will be a positive and popular component to the ultimate final plan for the property. As you are aware, many community members and organizations have advocated for us and for our desire to farm part of the Fernald Center property.

If you have any further questions or need clarification of our intent or plans, please don't hesitate to contact us. Again, we believe our next steps involve closer interaction with DCAM and the site planning process so that we can better determine the costs of rehabilitating the land and the buildings that would be dedicated to our use.

Most sincerely,

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