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Trail Section 15 ( T11) – Old cart path along flat terrace in woods, overgrown with garlic mustard, nettle, and poison ivy, but could be restored with some work.



*Overgrown cart path of Trail Section 15.*

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Trail Section 16 (M5) – Open meadow on UMass property. At time of visit, did not appear to have been mown for a year or two, although the stretch of meadow alongside the driveway had been recently mown. Would need a regularly mown path.



*Trail section 16 crosses open meadow.*

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Trail Section 17 (R3) – Driveway into UMass property. Trail could run through meadow, alternatively.



*View of Trail Section 17 south to Beaver Street.*

## **Conclusion**

The preferred trail route mapped and described above passes through a variety of natural communities and wildlife habitats which provide aesthetic attractions and opportunities for wildlife observation and nature study. On the Girl Scouts and UMass land in particular, a visitor will have the feeling of utter isolation even within the busy surrounding suburbanized landscape. The short stretches of trail along the Fernald Center roads detract only modestly from the natural quality of the trail, but the road network is extensive and could be confusing to a trail user. Clear signage would be necessary to assist visitors in following the trail along the road network.

Discussions with managers of the Girl Scouts property will need to include a focus on directing visitors along the Greenway trail and not onto the camp's internal trail network. Future use of the maintenance area east of the pools (Trail Section 13) could influence a final trail route through this area. Finally, location and maintenance of trails through the Fernald Center and UMass meadows will require coordination with property staff at each site to mow these paths.

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July 17, 2009

The Honorable Jeannette A. McCarthy  
Mayor, Chairperson, Fernald Reuse Committee  
City of Waltham  
City Hall  
610 Main Street  
Waltham, MA 02452

Dear Jeannette,

As a former resident of 20 Albemarle Road here in Waltham, a property within 300 feet of the Fernald Center and as someone very interested in what happens to the Fernald campus once (and if) it is declared surplus, I am responding to your letter of July 7, 2009.

The ultimate disposition and reuse of the Fernald property will have a major impact on the entire city of Waltham. I do not believe it will be positive if any developer is permitted to proceed with construction of housing or commercial/industrial/office/hotel space on that property. I vigorously oppose any use of this kind. Such development will immobilize traffic on Trapelo Road from the Cambridge line to Lincoln and will make travel within this city unbearable if not virtually impossible. In addition it would have a major negative impact on our infrastructure systems and will eventually cost the city millions of dollars in infrastructure upgrade costs that will not be offset by any fees or taxes realized from the developments. Can the taxpayers of Waltham afford that? I can't.

My first choice is to have Fernald remain open for the life of its residents. However, this will probably not be possible given the political and economic climate that exists now. I firmly believe it will be in the best interest of this city to try to acquire all or as much of the surplus property as is possible. But, before any re-use planning is seriously considered the Committee must have plot plans of the various parcels and an accurate summary of the acreage involved. If I recall correctly, we do not know how much of the property has been leased to UMASS Medical Center. This information is vital, as are the statistics applicable to the Middlesex Human Services Agency operating homeless shelters on the campus. Estimates will not suffice.

As you know, DDS has determined that Malone Park (21, 22, 23 & 24) will become state operated community homes. At a meeting held on Sunday, July 12, 2009, Diane Enochs, Deputy Commissioner said that access to those homes would remain as it is now, via the Trapelo Road entrance to the property. When asked about building a separate access

road, she responded that there are no current plans to build another access road. However, we must not overlook the fact that separate access will in fact be needed, and perhaps mandated, in the future.

The Marquardt Nursing Center, also scheduled to remain open, really needs more parking space for visitors and staff. I do not recall any mention of this need at any of the meetings that have been held. DCAM has talked about plans for the building, but I don't recall that additional parking was discussed.

Again, the reuse committee needs plot plans for both of these locations to determine what is available for possible use by a potential buyer(s).

The Greene Building houses a newly refurbished swimming pool and gym. I envision both of these assets utilized by the citizens of Waltham with perhaps a small fee charged for usage. Many people receiving services through community based programs for persons with disabilities use the pool daily. Several groups, including some parochial and private schools use the gym for basketball and other activities. Again, charging a fee for use would help to offset the cost of operations. Municipal acquisition of this building would benefit the community at large. The remainder of the building could easily be converted to City use such as offices or a health club with an annual fee for use. The possibility exists that it might **even be leased back to DDS for offices with build-out costs rolled into a lease agreement with DCAM.** (According to Gail Gillespie, Regional Director, they are currently looking for rental space in the area.) The ball field could be preserved as a recreational facility for community use and could be a source of additional revenue.

In addition, I suggest the committee consider turning as much space as possible into a cemetery. The name Owl Hill Cemetery comes to mind. As you know, Waltham is in need of additional cemetery space. The use of the remainder of the property for that purpose would allow usage that would not cause undue disruption to the existing neighborhoods or on the flow of traffic. And it would not require extensive improvements to the city's already overburdened infrastructure system. Healthy and beautiful old trees could be preserved, habitats for a variety of wildlife would be preserved and walking or biking trails could be incorporated in the design as well as an observation pavilion where Kelly Hall now stands. Leaving the Chapel standing would allow use of the building for funeral and or memorial services prior to burial in much the way that the Mt. Auburn and Newton Cemeteries offer to their clients. It would also serve as a memorial of the Fernald Community who worshiped, lived on the site, labored, volunteered, and contributed their time, talent and treasure to Fernald.

The Howe Library ought to be restored or rebuilt and could become a museum to house Fernald's more than 150 years of research documents and treatment artifacts. This is priceless history and it ought to be conserved and repose where it originated. Perhaps Brandeis University would be interested in assisting with such a project.

Many of the historic buildings on the campus are regrettably compromised beyond what a reasonable person would consider recoverable. While I applaud the efforts to restore and rehabilitate them, in some cases, it may not be the best choice for spending limited resources. Rather, a filmed tour of these buildings could be compiled and stored in the Howe Hall Library, or one of the buildings that is salvageable and become part of an historic presentation.

Another possibility is the acquisition of Tarbell Hall (used as Sandra's Lodge) and Farrell Hall (one of the "insignificant" buildings) for conversion to **low cost condominium units** under the auspices of the Waltham Housing Authority. The purchase price of these units would recover some of the initial acquisition cost and the units would be added to the city's tax base. There is an existing good sized, fenced-in playground area located between these buildings that would make them attractive to young families and senior citizens who enjoy being around children.

I realize the Reuse Committee will have many suggestions from the community-at-large, to evaluate and discuss, but I hope my suggestions will receive serious consideration. I believe they are within the stated goals of preserving as much open space as possible and being of benefit to the City as a whole, and in consideration of the men and women who will still call parts of Fernald "home".

Sincerely,

Ann Witham