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Waltham Field Station Tenant Working Group

Waltham Field Station Tenants Share Concerns

Tenants of the iconic UMass Waltham Field Station are confronted with a serious, existential threat and begin 2019 in a critical phase of our long-term tenancies. UMass has communicated the intention to shutter the administrative offices at 240 Beaver Street on December 31, 2019.

In addition to the building closure, the future use of the 58-acre site is unclear. Tenants have yet to receive written assurances regarding access to, and preservation of, the historic agricultural land. Tenants of the Waltham Field Station are non-profit community organizations that directly benefit residents of the City of Waltham, and include: **Waltham Fields Community Farm, Waltham Land Trust, Boston Area Gleaners, Green Rows of Waltham Community Gardens, Grow Native Massachusetts, Mass Federation of Farmers Markets, Boston Area Climate Experiment and Massachusetts 4-H.**

Tenant representatives, feeling vulnerable to lease clauses, elected a prudent strategy to be respectful of what we believe are ongoing negotiations between the University and the City aimed at a transfer of site ownership. Tenants remain hopeful that impactful communication is happening, but time is expiring as are leases with the non-profit organizations.

In response to the impending closure, citizens acting independently of the non-profit tenant organizations initiated grassroots campaigns to advocate preservation of the Waltham Field Station as a vibrant agricultural site and for the non-profit tenants to continue their invaluable programs. As stakeholders and dedicated stewards of the site, tenants are pleased to receive the deep public support for their programs and for the vital agricultural land.

Tenants encourage citizens to contact City and State representatives to voice their urgent concerns regarding the fate and future of the Waltham Field Station. The community has rallied and they seek to **preserve the Waltham Field Station in its entirety for continued agricultural uses and honor the historic legacy of the site including its benefactor, Cornelia Warren.**

Our immediate goal is to avoid eviction from this unique agricultural site. It is hoped that all parties will advance a good faith effort in resolving this issue, as soon as possible. In the meantime, tenants need a mechanism to keep their vital programs in full operation. For this reason, we ask the University to extend leases beyond the current deadline and offer assurances to not lock the facility prior to resolution of the issues. Without such assurances, much of our non-profit programming is uncertain and the irreplaceable farmland at the Waltham Field Station remains vulnerable.

This statement was written jointly by the Waltham Field Station Tenant Working Group.

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