

January 9, 2018

Mr. Jeremy L. Elrod
Nashville Metro Councilman, District 26

Dear Councilman Elrod:

Thank you for your email of December 19, which continues the discussion from your September 15 letter regarding the state's Ellington Agricultural Center property on Darlington Drive.

I understand and appreciate the points you make about local neighborhood views of the Ellington Agricultural Center campus. I fully realize this is an issue of importance to residents there.

I am glad that you and members of the local neighborhood association, as well as Senator Steve Dickerson, met in October with John Hull, deputy commissioner of our real estate division, and he explained our reasons for selecting this site for the new Regional Intervention Program (RIP) facility. I'm also pleased that representatives of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services explained the nature of the RIP and the use of the facility that will be constructed on the site. I hope these discussions have been helpful in correcting some of the mistaken impressions that apparently existed among local residents.

It is perhaps useful for me to note a couple of points that, while they may have been brought out in your earlier discussions with General Services and Mental Health representatives, are worth restating:

- The state has owned this property since 1957, and during that time its use has changed slowly, but development has occurred in response to the evolving needs of state programs and services to citizens. This is consistent with the state's original purpose in acquiring the property.
- Your letter mentions local residents having a "reasonable expectation" that the state would maintain the Ellington Agricultural Center property as green space. Such an expectation is not based on any assurances expressed or implied by the state. We have always intended to use this property in the manner we believed would most benefit state government operations and all the taxpayers of Tennessee, and we have never suggested otherwise.
- The streets through the Ellington Agricultural Center are not municipal thoroughfares but state property, and their primary use is in support of state facilities located on the site. This

means that at times there may be restrictions on public use of these streets, in response to the needs of state agencies located there.

- The State Building Commission, Tennessee's highest authority over the construction and operation of state buildings and property, has approved the capital project for constructing the RIP facility at this site, and funding is allocated in the state's 2017-18 budget.

With that said, please be aware that our intent is for the Ellington Agricultural Center and all state facilities located on that property -- now or in the future -- to be good neighbors. As plans for the design of the new RIP facility move forward, we will be happy to share them with you and local residents so that you are kept as informed as possible about the progress of this project. I know that my colleagues in the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services assured you in a December 19 email of their willingness to help educate community members about the services that available through the RIP. I hope these communication efforts by the state will help reduce any concerns you or your constituents have about the state's use of its property in your district.

Thank you again for sharing your views on this issue.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Bob Oglesby