

December 15, 2009

Mr. Erico Lopez  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Castle Square Rehabilitation

Dear Mr. Lopez:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Project Notification Form for the Castle Square rehabilitation project. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the city where the integrity of building foundations is threatened by low groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. Therefore, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

As noted in the PNF, the project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established by Article 32 of the zoning code. Although it has not yet been firmly established whether the project will cross the substantial renovation threshold that would subject it to GCOD compliance, I am pleased with the commitment made during the scoping session, and reiterated during a subsequent meeting with the proponent, to meet the recharge requirements in full if the project is subject to them. Based on our meeting and the information in the PNF, I believe that there are ample opportunities to meet this requirement in a relatively economical way, primarily using space in the parking areas that are enclosed by the project.

Because this is an important rehabilitation of a 100% affordable housing development, I look forward to continuing to work with the proponent and the Authority to find the most economical way to meet the requirements.

However, because the project is located in a particularly sensitive site near areas of longstanding low groundwater levels with wood piling supported buildings across Tremont and East Berkeley Streets and possibly Shawmut Avenue, the substantial recharge structures required because of the large roof area of the project have the potential to provide a very important benefit to efforts to raise groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer  
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA  
Maura Zlody, BED