Groundwater Monitoring Set To Begin in January

by Susan Husserl-Kapit **Courant News Writer**

Progress has been made on one front of the Back Bay groundwater problem while another potential problem has emerged.

The city-appointed Boston Groundwater Trust Board of Trustees is finalizing a contract for regular monitoring of observation wells that will, it is hoped, help prevent further deterioration to wood piles that support many buildings in the Back Bay, Beacon Hill and Fenway. Wood piles can weaken and eventually cause buildings to collapse when not continuously saturated by groundwater.

The Raymond Property Company donated \$25,000 to the Trust to cover six to nine months of monitoring. The primary investigators will come from the Wentworth Institute of Technology and a group of concerned geotechnical engineers. Observation well data will be collected by a Wentworth civil engineering student.

About 200 still-functioning test

wells in Boston will be measured six times a year to reflect seasonal and annual changes. A database will be established so that water level information can be available to the public via the Internet.

"This is a huge step forward," said the board's co-chair Tim Mitchell, "The last time the wells were monitored was about ten years ago."

The program should commence by January 11.

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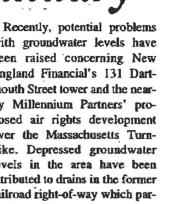
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with groundwater levels have been raised concerning New England Financial's 131 Dartmouth Street tower and the nearby Millennium Partners' proposed air rights development over the Massachusetts Turnpike. Depressed groundwater levels in the area have been attributed to drains in the former railroad right-of-way which parallels the Massachusetts Turnpike. Januarie on page 34





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Fred Mauet, chair of the Citizens for Reasonable Tumpike Development committee, declared it "could be a major source of groundwater deterioration in the Back Bay, South End and Fenway."

Groundwater

"This is a disturbing issue and should be investigated," Mauet added. "It is important for both the Turnpike and the railroad to repair any existing infrastructure that might already be damaging the groundwater in that area.

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