

BOSTON GROUNDWATER TRUST (BGWT)
BOARD MEETING
January 11, 2006
The Lenox Hotel – Patriot Room

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Boston Groundwater Trust was called order at 4:19pm in the Copley Room at The Lenox Hotel. The meeting notice was posted at City Hall in accordance with provision of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law.

Trustees in attendance, comprising a quorum, were:

Mr. Tim Mitchell, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay
Mr. Gary Saunders, Back Bay Association
Mr. Peter Sherin, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Galen Gilbert, Fenway Community Development Corp.
Mr. James Stetson, Beacon Hill Civic Association
Mr. Jim Hunt, City of Boston
Ms. Nancy Grilk, Mayor's office
Ms. Nikko Mendoza, Mayor's office
Mr. Michael Nairne, Ellis Neighborhood Association

Also present were:

Elliott Laffer, BGWT Executive Director; Christian Simonelli, BGWT Technical Coordinator; James Lambrechts, BGWT Technical Committee; Paul Olsen, ERA City State Real Estate; Jeff Cater, ERA City State Real Estate

NOTE: Mr. Laffer noted that a quorum shall be constituted at each meeting if at least a number of Trustees equal to a majority of the Constituent Trustees are present in person. All Trustees present, including ex-officio trustees count towards a quorum.

1. Adoption of the minutes of the November 17, 2005 Meeting

Minutes were distributed to board members for review.

Trustee Mitchell moved to adopt the minutes. Trustee Sherin seconded the motion.

Voted: To accept the minutes of the November 17, 2005.

2. Finance Report

Trustee Sherin reviewed the BGwT *Financial Report*. Discussion followed.

3. Executive Committee

Mr. Laffer discussed the possibility of an executive committee being established.

Trustee Mitchell commented on meeting with co-chair Trustee Saunders and BGwT Executive Director Elliott Laffer regularly between meetings. He felt that the establishment of such a committee was not necessary. Trustee Saunders agreed. Discussion followed.

4. Appointment of Committee Members

Mr. Laffer discussed establishing three (3) committees and appointing members. The three (3) committee's are as follows:

- 1.) **Technical Advisory/Assistance Committee:** Assist the public in understanding the groundwater problem and how to help raise groundwater levels in their area.
- 2.) **Funding Assistance Committee:** To assist homeowners in finding sources of financial assistance for foundation repairs related to low groundwater levels.
- 3.) **Long Term Funding Committee:** To assist the BGwT in finding stable long term sources of funding for its operations.

Mr. Laffer noted that he would be the lead in establishing these committees and attend all meetings that the committees held. Discussion followed.

Appointments of committee members were as follows:

Technical Advisory/Assistance Committee: Nikko Mendoza, Michael Nairne, James Lambrechts

Funding Assistance Committee: Galen Gilbert, James Stetson, Matt Thall (Recruited by Galen Gilbert)

Long Term Funding Committee: Galen Gilbert, Nancy Grilk

Additional committee members will be solicited by Trustees from their appointing organizations.

5. Executive Director's Report

BGwT Executive Director Mr. Elliott Laffer distributed his report and reviewed his activities since the last meeting. Discussion followed. Refer to the attached *Executive Director's Report: January 11, 2006*, for a complete list of all activities. Discussion followed.

6. Technical Coordinator's Report

BGwT Technical Coordinator Mr. Christian Simonelli presented his activities of the past month. Discussion followed. Refer to the attached *Technical Coordinator's Well Monitoring & Installation Report BGwT Meeting: January 11, 2006* for a complete list of what was distributed and presented.

The meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: To be scheduled.

Notes by Christian Simonelli, BGwT Technical Coordinator, on 01/12/06

Respectfully submitted



Galen Gilbert, Secretary

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 11, 2006

- 1. City/State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group will meet again tomorrow. We will again lead off the agenda with an update on current conditions. Other agenda items include updates from BWSC on its capital planning, from the MBTA on plans for the St. Charles Street area and on its capital improvement plan groundwater expenditure, from DCR on the Storrow Drive underpass, from the MTA on apparent problem areas in East Boston, the North End, and along Herald Street, and from the BRA about the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District zoning.
- 2. Zoning** – The BRA has received and analyzed the comments on the GCOD proposal. They plan to have a meeting shortly with people outside the Authority who are concerned about the groundwater issue, including us, to go over potential refinements, which include an expansion of the original map. They plan to take a zoning proposal to their Board for approval on Jan. 26.
- 3. BWSC** – The sewer reconstruction and recharge system in the Hemenway St alley has not yet led to any increase in groundwater levels in that area. In fact, levels there generally dropped more than in any other area during the last interval between readings. John Sullivan does not yet have an answer about why that would have occurred. It will be explored in more detail during the Working Group meeting.
- 4. DCR** – The DCR continues to work on the design of the replacement Storrow Drive underpass, including necessary traffic diversion during construction. Press reports have made clear that groundwater issues are among those that must be addressed. Other groups in the area, including the Esplanade Association and the Back Bay Association have raised serious issues about potential effects during the construction process, which may take three years or more. We should get more details at the Working Group meeting.
- 5. MBTA** – The T has included \$2.97 million for groundwater remediation work in their five year draft capital improvement plan. The bulk of the money would be spent in FY2008, with \$60,000 earmarked for FY2007, presumably for planning. The projects to be pursued are not identified in the plan. I spoke at a public hearing on the CIP in favor of the allocation and thanked the T for moving to become part of the solution to the problem.
- 6. MTA** – The Turnpike Authority has hired a consultant to evaluate the information discovered during their investigation of the Sumner Tunnel approach in East Boston for potential leakage. We will get a copy of the report; no current leakage is indicated, and the approach was built as a waterproof wall with no drainage. The MTA will also be evaluating approaches to the Callahan Tunnel in the North End in response to reports of

- reduced groundwater levels in that area. They have found one relatively small leak in their structure in the area near Herald Street, which will be repaired. This could be the cause of low groundwater in that area. The CA/T will make final arrangements to turn over to us five wells that we have identified as potentially useful to our network.
7. **St. Charles St** – I spoke with a staff person for Speaker DiMasi who assures me that the funds for the work in the St. Charles Street area will be in the supplemental budget when it comes out of the conference committee. Timing remains somewhat uncertain because of other major priorities in the Legislature. A meeting among Jim Lambrechts, John Sullivan, and a consultant for the T took place last month to discuss more details of potential solutions, including that put forward in the Wentworth project.
 8. **Well Installation** – We have installed the first of the wells in East Boston. Because of our inability to install about 40 of our originally planned wells, the Technical Advisory Committee will consider potential alternate sites at its next meeting. Construction work will resume in April.
 9. **Well reversion** – We have received complete documentation from the Trilogy project for the four wells that they have turned over to us, including installation details, rim elevations, and historic readings (which we had also received during construction). The wells will be in our network for the next readings in February.
 10. **Children’s Museum** – In my comments on the Children’s Museum’s planned expansion and renovation project, I had suggested that they look into the possibility of recharging from their existing roof to Sleeper Street and also look into potential educational programs that would show the importance of groundwater to the buildings of Boston. The Secretary of EOE, in her findings letter, suggested that the Museum work with us. I testified at the public hearing on their application for a Chapter 91 Waterways license last week and raised both issues again. I’ll be meeting with the COO of the Museum on Friday to discuss how best to incorporate these ideas. I think that we might be able to get an exhibit.
 11. **Website** – The readings on the website have been updated on a rolling basis as they are received and checked. The entire process is much easier to implement, especially as the number of readings has grown. I continue to get positive feedback on the site. Traffic remains pretty steady at the higher levels that we reached last year.
 12. **EPA Grant** – The City is in the final stages of putting together its application for use of the US EPA funds earmarked in the last budget. I have been in discussions with Jim Hunt and Nancy Grilk about details. This should be finalized shortly.
 13. **Course for Christian** – We are making plans for Christian to take a course at Wentworth this quarter on Soils and Foundations. This will give us additional in house expertise as we get increasingly involved in the approval process on significant projects. The course runs from next week to late April, and will conclude just as installation season begins again.
 14. **Press** – The Associated Press story on Boston’s groundwater problem ran in newspapers around New England in mid-December (it’s posted on our website). It appeared this week in a paper in Raleigh, NC. There was also a groundwater story in the Courant in December.
 15. **Comment Letters** – I filed comments on the Museum of Fine Arts and on Simmons College. I expect to be filing in the next month on new projects at 346-354 Congress Street in the Fort Point Channel area and at 212 Stuart Street in Bay Village. I will also be filing followup comments on the Children’s Museum’s application for a Chapter 91 Waterways license.
 16. **501(c)3** – We continue to await the approval letter from the IRS, which has said that it has 200 days to review our application. Our attorney, Bruce Wickersham, has advised that there is no good way to push the IRS, and that efforts to do so would likely be counterproductive. We have received an extension for our taxes. The return is complete in draft form and will be filed upon receipt of the approval letter.
 17. **Funding** – I have invoiced for the remaining \$71,000 in operating funds from the City for this fiscal year and expect to receive it shortly. I will also follow up with BWSC about a contribution; they operate on a calendar year.

- 18. Level Logging Equipment** – We have resolved the hardware and software glitches on the new level logging equipment. However, we are still learning how to install it to get the most effective readings. We should have readings from over twenty key wells before the next meeting.

WELL MONITORING

The BGwT's latest set of readings are indicated below. There are currently 664 wells in the BGwT's network. Of those 664 wells:

- 135 Wells @ elevation >7'
- 193 wells @ elevation 5'- 7'
- 105 wells @ elevation 3'-5'
- 36 wells @ elevation <3'
- 195 wells @ no reading

Note: The high number of wells with no reading largely represents inaccessible wells due to snow and ice cover.

INSTALLATIONS

- Installations ended on Monday November 7, 2005.
- We will resume our installations in late April 2006, once the city moratorium is lifted.
- All wells installed have been surveyed and are now in the network and on the website.