

BOSTON GROUNDWATER TRUST (BGwT)
BOARD MEETING
July 17th, 2014

The Board of Trustees of the Boston Groundwater Trust held its meeting in the Patriot Room at the Lenox Hotel. The Executive Director posted a meeting notice at City Hall in accordance with provision of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law. Mr. Mitchell, co-chair, called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm. The following trustees were present:

Mr. Tim Mitchell, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay
Mr. Peter Shilland, Ellis Neighborhood Association
Ms. Janine Commerford, Greater Boston Real Estate Board (GBREB)
Mr. Greg Galer, the Boston Preservation Alliance
Mr. Josh Zakim, City Council District 8

Also present:

Elliott Laffer, BGwT Executive Director; Christian Simonelli, BGwT Technical & Recharge Coordinator; Mr. Jacob Glickel, Chief of Staff of Environment & Energy (City of Boston); Mr. John Hemenway, Beacon Hill resident

1. Adoption of the minutes of the May 15th, 2014 Meeting

Minutes were previously electronically distributed to board members for review. Discussion followed.

Mr. Galer, Trustee, moved to adopt the revised minutes; Mr. Shilland, Trustee, seconded the motion.

Voted: To accept the minutes of the May 15th, 2014 meeting.

2. Financial Report

In lieu of Ms. Sherden, Trustee, (absent) Mr. Laffer reviewed the BGwT financial reports, previously distributed to the trustees electronically. Mr. Laffer noted that the Trust has received its annual contribution of \$25K from Boston Water & Sewer. Discussion followed.

3. Potential GCOD Changes

Mr. Laffer reviewed potential changes to permitting processes currently governing implementation of the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District (GCOD) as established by Article 32 of the Boston Zoning Code. The current process requires all projects that meet one of the three "triggers" in Article 32 to secure a conditional use permit (GCOD permit) from the Board of Appeals. This leads to significant extension of the time required to obtain a building permit for these projects. Proposed streamlining would help expedite projects that are cited for GCOD compliance by exempting projects cited for the "substantial renovation" trigger only from the Conditional Use Permit requirement, allowing ISD to issue building permits following a process that continues to maintain the improvements gained through the GCOD. Discussion followed.

Mr. Laffer noted that he met separately with Mr. Swett, Chief of Environment & Energy (City of Boston) and ISD Commissioner William Christopher to discuss this issue. Mr. Laffer noted that he would draft a proposed plan by the end of this week and send it to Mr. Swett for review. He will also be meeting with Boston City Councilors Zakim and Wu to discuss the issue. Discussion followed.

4. Porous Alley Project Update

BGwT Technical & Recharge Coordinator Mr. Christian Simonelli updated the Board on the Porous Alley Project in Alley 543 located in the South End. Mr. Simonelli noted that the project commenced this past Monday (July 14th) and should take about 3 weeks to complete, weather permitting. Discussion followed.

5. Annual Review of Groundwater Levels

Mr. Simonelli reviewed the progress that was made in various areas in 2013 & 2014. Mr. Simonelli reviewed locations along Storrow Drive/Lower Beacon Hill, The Back Bay, The Fenway, The South End, and Bay Village. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli also noted areas where work is still needed to help raise groundwater levels. Discussion followed.

Mr. Simonelli also noted that a new part-time well reader has been hired from Wentworth Institute of Technology and will begin a new set of readings in September. Discussion followed.

6. Executive Director's Report

BGwT Executive Director Mr. Elliott Laffer distributed his report. Discussion followed. Refer to the attached *Executive Director's Report: July 17th, 2014* for a complete list of all activities.

7. Technical & Recharge Coordinator's Update

BGwT Technical & Recharge Coordinator Mr. Christian Simonelli reviewed his activities since last meeting. Discussion followed. Refer to the attached *Technical & Recharge Coordinator's Update BGwT Meeting: July 17th, 2014* for a complete list of all activities.

8. **Other Business**

Mr. Mitchell, co-chair updated the board on staff meetings that he and Mr. Saunders, co-chair have had with Mr. Laffer and Mr. Simonelli. Discussion followed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: September 18th, 2014 @ 4:00 pm at the Lenox Hotel.
Notes submitted by Christian Simonelli, BGWT Technical & Recharge Coordinator, on 7/21/14.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
July 17, 2014

1. **City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group will meet again on July 24.
2. **MBTA** – The T has completed their system to raise groundwater levels in the section of the South End south of Back Bay Station. Levels have stabilized and are generally in the acceptable range except in the area near the Benjamin Franklin Institute. The school this month put into service a system to recharge groundwater that it has been pumping into the BWSC sewer system. We have seen some subsequent increase in levels in data loggers near the school and are eager to see where they will stabilize.
3. **BWSC** – BWSC continues to investigate the cause of low groundwater levels near the corner of Commercial and Richmond Streets in the North End;; inspection of the large sewer pipe by a diver did not reveal any problems. They have plans for future lining of pipes in the area to maintain their system in good repair that may overcome the problem if a source is not found before the work is scheduled. On Blagdon Street, inspections so far do not reveal a likely BWSC related problem; they will look farther if the MassDOT repairs (see below) do not lead to increased water levels on Blagdon Street.
4. **MassDOT** – MassDOT inspected the rest of the drain line from the MassPike Prudential tunnel and discovered several leaks near Exit 20, very close to a long standing low groundwater zone at the corner of Exeter Street and Huntington Avenue. They have completed repairs. They found a leak in a pipe belonging to the Copley Place structure, for which MassDOT is the landlord; subsequent inspection showed no leakage.
5. **Exeter St/Huntington Ave Area** – This has been a long-time hard to explain low groundwater level area. When MassDOT found leakage nearby in the Turnpike drain line, we were hopeful that would lead to higher levels. Levels dropped further a few months ago, but that coincided with the beginning of dewatering for underpinning at a nearby property that we and our Technical Advisory Committee thought was the likely cause of the drawdown. However, levels have continued to drop to the lowest that we have ever measured (some of the wells have been read since 1999), and the engineer for the repair project has advised us that they are no longer dewatering near Huntington Ave, have recharged all of the water from the dewatering on site, and are also mystified and concerned about the low levels. This will be a topic of discussion at the City-State Groundwater Working Group meeting next week.
6. **GCOD** – Concerns have been raised by developers, contractors, and others about the amount of time that GCOD-compliant plans have taken to get final approvals through the zoning process. While the special session for GCOD only requests that has been instituted by the Board of Appeals has reduced the wait for these projects by as much as two months, there are still complaints about the time to get through the system. I have met separately with new ISD Commissioner William Christopher and with Brian Swett and will be meeting with Councilors Yu and Zakim later this month to discuss ways to streamline the system without removing the protections inherent in the GCOD zoning.
7. **Porous Alley** – Construction on the Porous Alley project in the South End began this week. If there are no unanticipated delays, it should take about three weeks to complete. We have data loggers in six wells around the project, including two wells installed in the alley as part of the process, and will have nearly a year of data on the response of groundwater levels to precipitation with the conventional pavement and will be analyzing comparable data post construction to see how the response changes.
8. **Meetings** – In addition to the meetings on GCOD mentioned above, Christian and I participated in the public meeting about the Porous Alley project that was held to keep neighbors up-to-date.

TECHNICAL & RECHARGE COORDINATOR'S UPDATE

BGwT Meeting: July 17TH, 2014

TECHNICAL COORDINATOR DUTIES

WELL MONITORING

I completed the fifth set of readings for 2014 on Tuesday July 15th. This is the last set of readings that I'll be making as Technical Coordinator.

NEW WELL READER

The next set of readings will commence the first week in September and will be made by our new part-timer Andrew Metropolis. Andrew is a junior at Wentworth Institute of Technology who is majoring in Civil Engineering. Andrew interviewed very well and was hired on June 23rd.

WELL INSTALLATIONS

Our 11 well installation contract will start on Monday July 28th. Weather permitting I hope to have all 11 wells installed by Monday August 11th; which accounts for about 2 weeks' worth of work. All permit applications have been submitted and will be picked up next week.

MEETINGS

- Interviewed potential part-timers on 6/9, 6/18, 6/19, & 6/20
- Met with the Trust Technical Advisory Committee on 5/28
- Met with new South End/Bay Village Neighborhood Coordinator Jordan Deasy on 6/6

RECHARGE COORDINATOR DUTIES

MEETINGS

- Met with representatives from 49-53 Hereford Street to review their proposed Recharge System on 5/16
- Met with representatives from the Copley Place building to review their proposed Recharge System on 5/28
- Attended Alley 543 pre-construction meeting on 6/25
- Attended Alley 543 public meeting on 7/7
- Spoke with residents and developers about the installation of different types of recharge systems that can be installed

- Continued to write comment letter drafts on past projects and review them with Elliott

DATA LOGGER LOCATIONS

Ellis Neighborhood (7)

- 1 at the corner of Berkley & Chandler St.
- 1 on Saint Charles St.
- 2 on Cazenove St.
- 1 at the corner of Tremont & Appleton St.
- 1 on Columbus Ave., adjacent to 75 Clarendon St.
- 1 in front of 41 Berkeley St.

Blagden Street (3)

- 2 from the Exeter – Dartmouth St.
- 1 in front of the Copley Square Hotel

North End: Commercial Street (3)

- 1 at the corner of Richmond and Commercial St.
- 1 on Commercial St. in front of 145 Commercial St.
- 1 on Atlantic Ave., in front of 103 Atlantic Ave.

Alignment Loggers (3 Uploaded on a Monthly basis)

- 1 Between Turnpike Crash Wall and the Railroad alignment, underneath the Arlington St. Bridge
- 1 Between Turnpike Crash Wall and the Railroad alignment, underneath the Berkeley St. Bridge
- 1 Adjacent to the alignment, at the rear of 95 Berkeley St.

Southwest Corridor: Alley 543, West Canton, & Holyoke Street (6)

- 2 in Alley 543
- 1 in front of 243 West Canton Street
- 1 in front of 38 Holyoke Street
- 1 in front of 24 Holyoke Street
- 1 @ at the corner of Holyoke Street and Columbus Avenue

BU/Audubon Circle (1)

- 1 in front of 879 Beacon Street