

BOSTON GROUNDWATER TRUST (BGwT)  
BOARD MEETING  
November 17, 2005  
The Lenox Hotel – Patriot Room

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Boston Groundwater Trust was called to order at 4:10pm 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. Peter Sherin, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce  
Mr. Paul Chan, Greater Boston Real Estate Board  
Mr. Galen Gilbert, Fenway Community Development Corp.  
Mr. Michael Ross, Boston City Councilor for District 8  
Ms. Nancy Grilk, Mayor's office  
Ms. Nikko Mendoza, Mayor's office

Also present were:

Michael Nairne, Trustee Designate from the Ellis South End Neighborhood Association (not yet sworn in); Elliott Laffer, BGwT Executive Director; Christian Simonelli, BGwT Technical Coordinator; James Lambrechts, BGwT Technical Committee; Michael Paster, BGwT Technical Committee

**1. Number of Trustees Required for Quorum**

Mr. Laffer reviewed the arithmetic on the number of Trustees that must be present in order to comprise a quorum. Discussion followed.

**2. Adoption of the minutes of the October 11, 2005 Meeting**

Minutes were distributed to board members for review.

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

**Voted:** To accept the minutes of the October 11, 2005.

**3. 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: November 17, 2005*, for a complete list of all activities.

**4. 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: November 17, 2005* for a complete list of what was distributed and presented.

**5. Finance Report**

Trustee Sherin reviewed the BGwT *Financial Report and reconciliation detail*. Discussion followed.

**6. Election of a Secretary**

Mr. Laffer introduced the topic of electing a secretary for the BGwT. Discussion followed.

Trustee Chan nominated Trustee Gilbert for secretary. Trustee Mitchell seconded. Trustee Gilbert accepted the nomination.

**Voted:** To accept Trustee Gilbert as secretary of the BGwT effective immediately.

**7. Adoption of Health & Safety Policy**

Mr. Laffer presented the final draft of the BGwT Health & Safety policy. Discussion followed.

Trustee Sherin expressed interest in having a legal firm review the final draft in order to ensure that everything is in order. Trustee Gilbert stated that he felt comfortable with the current draft. Trustee Ross suggested the BGwT look into selecting legal counsel to perform pro-bono work such as reviewing documents like the Health & Safety plan. Trustee Ross offered to look into what legal counsel may be available.

Trustee Chan moved that the BGwT let Trustee Ross look into the availability of legal counsel for the BGwT and also to adopt the final draft of the Health and Safety plan. Trustee Gilbert seconded the motion.

**Voted:** To adopt the final draft of the Health and Safety plan , and also to. let Trustee Ross look into the availability of legal counsel for the BGwT. Vote was unanimous with one abstention.

## **8. Adoption of Strategic Plan**

Mr. Laffer presented the BGwT strategic plan for 2006-2008. Discussion followed.

Trustee Gilbert moved to add the following objectives under GOAL ONE: To raise groundwater levels:

objective #5 stating, "TO PROTECT WOOD PILE FOUNDATIONS",  
objective #6 stating, "TO PREVENT FOUNDATION PROBLEMS RELATED TO GROUNDWATER",  
objective #7 stating, "TO MAINTAIN THE AQUIFER AT APPROPRIATE LEVELS".

Discussion followed. Trustee Chan seconded the motion.

**Voted:** To adopt proposed objectives 5, 6, & 7.

Trustee Gilbert moved to adopt section II: Vision and Mission and section III: Goals of the strategic plan. Trustee Chan seconded the motion.

**Voted:** Motion passed

Trustee Gilbert moved to establish committees covering goals 4 & 5 of the strategic plan. Discussion followed. Trustee Chan seconded.

Trustee Sherin moved to amend Trustee Gilbert's motion to include goal 3 of the strategic plan. Discussion followed. Amendment accepted by the persons who moved and seconded

**Voted:** Motion passed as amended.

Trustee Gilbert moved that the BGwT write the BRA on including language in the groundwater conservation overlay district zoning document to emphasize using permeable materials in repaving area's of the city. Trustee Chan seconded.

**Voted:** Motion passed..

**The meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.**

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday January 12, 2006 @ 4:00pm in the Lenox Hotel.**

**Submitted by Christian Simonelli, BGwT Technical Coordinator, on 11/17/05**

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

November 17, 2005

1. **City/State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group had its first formal meeting on Oct. 28. In what will be the standard pattern for the group, I gave a presentation on what our latest readings were indicating. I also highlighted those areas that are showing the lowest groundwater readings, as well as those showing significant changes. The different agencies went through highlights of their current plans, as described below. The Working Group laid out its quarterly meeting schedule for the next year, with the next meeting set for Jan. 12.
2. **Zoning** – I spoke at the BRA's public meeting on the proposed Groundwater Conservation Overlay District zoning on Oct. 27. I was supportive of the zoning plan and of a change that had been proposed in a meeting the previous day with Jim Hunt, John Sullivan, and Don Wiest and Rick Shaklik of the BRA. This change would switch the requirement for recharge from the ability to infiltrate the water from a 2.55" 24 hour storm to the ability to capture the water from 1" of rain. This change clarifies the size requirement for the recharge system, eliminating the need to gauge the permeability of the soil. In most cases, it is likely to lead to no less infiltration.
3. **BWSC** – The sewer reconstruction and recharge system in the Hemenway St alley is nearly complete, now down to punchlist items. The contractor had some minor installation work to finish to make the recharge system operational. BWSC will be lining the West Side Interceptor from Clarendon St /Beacon St to Charles St/Pinckney St. They will also be reconstructing the sewer line under Back St. BWSC is investigating a potential leak in a line under Dartmouth St in the Back Bay. They are investigating possible leaks in the sewer line under Tremont St that may be causing low water levels in the South End. They plan additional repair work to the St. James Ave sewer.
4. **DCR** – The DCR continues to work on the design of the replacement Storrow Drive underpass, including necessary traffic diversion during construction. The schedule has slipped somewhat and now calls for a public meeting after the first of the year. The DCR representative at the Working Group meeting agreed that there had been a substantial change in pump flows starting in August 2004. He did not have a reason for it yet, but will investigate and get back.
5. **MBTA** – The T agrees that the analysis of their pumping data indicates that the Follen Street pump station is activated by accumulation of water on a regular basis that appears to be weather independent. They will be attempting to identify the source of the water.
6. **MTA** – The Turnpike Authority has done further investigation of the retaining wall at the Sumner Tunnel entrance in East Boston but has not yet discovered any apparent leakage that may be causing low groundwater levels there. They have conducted video surveys of their drains near Herald St and Chandler St to see if they have any leakage that could be depressing groundwater levels. In addition, we have now been given a list of remaining artery wells. Christian has examined the wells, and it looks like we will be incorporating five additional wells into our system.
7. **St. Charles St** – Speaker DiMasi, along with Reps Rushing and Walz, proposed an item in the supplemental appropriations bill that will fund a system to attempt to raise groundwater levels in the St. Charles St area. Although the language in the House bill needs correcting and the item is not in the Senate bill, it still looks like this will move ahead as the bills are reconciled in conference. Assuming that it goes ahead, the Trust will be an active partner with the City in the execution of this exciting project.
8. **Well Installation** – We have completed the 114 well contract and have begun the 180 well contract that will complete the basic buildout of the network. We need to evaluate the information from the first wells that we have installed in East Boston to try to determine if our original plan for about 100 wells in that area still makes sense; the

Technical Advisory Committee preliminarily thinks that it does. We also need to resite about 40 wells to make up for locations where obstructions prevented installation.

9. **Well reversion** – We received word that the Trilogy Project in the Fenway has completed the use of their observation wells. We will receive documentation and control of the four wells shortly.
10. **Meeting on Recharge** – Galen Gilbert and I met with Jim Hunt, John Sullivan, Nikko Mendoza of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Gordon Richardson of Citywide GET, and DPW Commissioner Joe Casazza on Nov 15 to discuss recharge from public sidewalks in the context of the proposed Groundwater Conservation Overlay District zoning. The meeting was an opportunity to explore ideas on reasonable and affordable ways to recharge. We discussed the concerns with using pervious concrete, especially the increased maintenance requirements. The City will explore the possibility of installing one or more pilot projects to see what real world experience might be in sidewalks or possibly parking lots.
11. **Website** – We have now completed the rework of the website. We have this week expanded the map so that it will show well locations in East Boston, South Boston, and the North End waterfront as we incorporate them into the system. We are now uploading readings directly as they are completed and quality checked, so that the site is updated on a rolling basis rather than all at once when readings are complete. Traffic to the site remains steady at levels far higher than a year ago.
12. **Strategic Planning** – Our strategic planning retreat on Oct. 20 was very successful. The draft of the plan is complete for consideration at today's meeting.
13. **EPA Grant** – I met with Jim Hunt on Nov 15 to discuss plans for use of the City's new US EPA grant. The City will probably contract with the Trust to conduct studies related to standardized recharge systems, alternate means of supporting foundations, a less costly and invasive means of determining pile cutoff elevations, as well as a study of the utility and value of using porous pavers. We will also be asked to prepare a pamphlet for property owners outlining the problem and what can be done to overcome it.
14. **UMass Boston** – I have tentative plans to make a presentation at UMass Boston to a student group, including some from other campuses, on the groundwater problem on Dec 1. Because so many of their students are Boston residents, this will be an opportunity to explain the problem to a group that may not have heard much about it.
15. **Press** – There were articles in both the Boston Courant and the South End News focused on the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District zoning. In addition, a more general piece on the groundwater problem appeared in NE Condominium magazine. All are on the website or will be shortly. I also did an interview with a reporter for the Associated Press for an article he was putting together on our groundwater problem; we don't know where or when it will run.
16. **Comment Letters** – I filed comments on the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District and on the Notice of Project Change for the Forecaster Building in the Bulfinch Triangle. Both are posted on the website or will be shortly. I plan to file comments on the FPIR for the Albany Fellows Mixed Use Project in the South End and the DPIR for the Simmons College School of Management in the Fenway.
17. **501(c)3** – We continue to await the approval letter from the IRS. 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.
18. **Annual Report** – The annual report is complete and is included in the documents for today's meeting. It will be posted on our website.
19. **Funding** – We have received the final funding from US EPA for the 114 well contract. Once again, MEPA and EPA did a great job of expediting payment.
20. **Level Logging Equipment** – We returned the originally ordered equipment that didn't fit into our wells. We have now received new smaller equipment. Unfortunately, a software problem prevented us from reading the results from the unit that we installed as a test. New software is supposed to be available this week. We have withheld payment pending operational equipment and software. The Technical Advisory has agreed on locations for initial installation of the equipment. We plan to have it in place before Thanksgiving.

- 21. Health and Safety Policy** – As promised, the proposed Health and Safety Policy is ready for adoption at today's meeting. Thanks to Mike Paster for his efforts on this.
- 22. Vacations** – Because he could not take vacation during the well installation season and also accumulated compensatory time because of hours worked, Christian will be on vacation from Thanksgiving through New Year's. Our coop students, Ashley Keepers and Stephen Guarante, will be completing one final set of well readings for the year in December, including quality control checks and uploading readings to our website. Ashley will also be entering detail data on the wells installed this year into our database. If needed, Christian will be available for consultation by phone. He will also periodically check his email and voicemail. I will be on vacation between Christmas and New Year's.

## Technical Coordinator's Well Monitoring and Installation Report

### 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:

- 164 wells @ elevation >7'
- 248 wells @ elevation 5'- 7'
- 130 wells @ elevation 3'-5'
- 36 wells @ elevation <3'
- 86 wells @ no reading

*Note:* The high number of wells with no reading largely represents new wells that have been installed and will be read for the first time in December 2005.

### INSTALLATIONS

Installations for 2005 ended on Monday November 7, 2005. A total of 43 out of the 180 proposed were installed. The remaining 137 wells will be installed beginning in April 2006.

Of the 43 installed:

- 14 wells in the East Boston Area
- 16 wells in the Fort Point Channel Area
- The remaining 13 wells covered the Back Bay, South End, and Lower Beacon Hill areas of Boston