

BOSTON GROUNDWATER TRUST (BGwT)
BOARD MEETING
November 16th, 2023

The Board of Trustees of the Boston Groundwater Trust met in the Patriot meeting room at the Lenox Hotel located at 61 Exeter Street, Boston, MA. The Executive Director electronically distributed the meeting notice and agenda to the City Clerk at Boston City Hall in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Open Meeting Law.

Mr. Robert Whitney, co-chair, read the following statement:

"I, Robert Whitney, co-chair of the Boston Groundwater Trust, am calling this meeting to order at 4:03 pm. In accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, we are conducting this meeting on-line. To ensure public access to the deliberations of the BOSTON GROUND-WATER TRUST, the public may access this meeting through telephone and video conferencing. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide public comment. To do so please, "raise your hand" in the application via the Zoom meeting platform. If you are calling in and cannot use the platform, you can send your questions to staff via email at csimonielli@bgwt.org or via X (formerly Twitter) by tagging the X handle @BOSTONGWT and using the hashtag #NOV23MTG."

The following trustees were present at the Lenox Hotel:

Mr. Robert Whitney, Beacon Hill Civic Association
Mr. Gary Saunders, Back Bay Association
Mr. Tim Mitchell, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay
Ms. Angie Liou, Asian Community Development Corporation
Mr. Peter Shilland, Ellis Neighborhood Association
Mr. Nick Pittman, Fenway Community Development Corporation
Ms. Sharon Durkan, City Councilor District 8

The following trustees were present virtually:

Ms. Janine Commerford, Greater Boston Real Estate Board
Ms. Katherine Eshel, Chief of Staff, Environment, Energy and Open Space, City of Boston
Ms. Beatrice Nessen, Boston Preservation Alliance

Also present at the Lenox Hotel was:

Mr. Christian Simonelli, Executive Director

Also present virtually was:

Mr. John Sullivan, Chief Engineer Boston Water & Sewer Commission

1. **New Trustees**

Mr. Simonelli reported that Boston Mayor Michelle Wu has appointed the following new trustees: Nick Pittman, Real Estate Senior Project Manager, representing the Fenway Community & Development Corporation (to replace Leah Camhi), Beatrice Nessen, representing the Boston Preservation Alliance (to replace Greg Galer), and Kate England, Director of Green Infrastructure, City of Boston. Discussion followed.

Regarding Trustees in holdover status, co-chair Robert Whitney asked Mr. Simonelli to determine what steps were required for re-appointment. Discussion followed. In addition, Mr. Saunders, co-chair, asked what the process is for increasing the existing two-year term for Trustees. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will follow-up with the City regarding the process for re-appointments and increasing the existing two-year term.

2. **Presentation by Chief Engineer John Sullivan from Boston Water & Sewer Commission on the New Stormwater Utility**

Mr. Simonelli introduced Mr. John Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan covered the following points during his presentation to the Board:

- A background of Boston's water & sewer system and relationship with the Trust
- Overview of BWSC's responsibilities.
- Description of BWSC's stormwater program and the reasoning behind the new stormwater utility fee.
- Impacts on customers and how they will be charged.
- Green infrastructure throughout the city and how that plays a role in stormwater management.

Mr. Sullivan took questions both during and after the presentation. Refer to the attached presentation for additional details.

3. **Adoption of September 14th, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes**

Meeting minutes were previously emailed to Board members for review. Discussion followed.

Mr. Whitney moved to adopt the minutes. Ms. Durkan, Trustee, seconded the motion. Ms. Liou, Trustee, abstained.

Voted: To adopt the Board meeting minutes for September 14th, 2023.

4. Financial Report

Mr. Whitney, co-chair, and Mr. Simonelli reviewed the Trust's financials. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli also noted that bonds will need to be purchased and that he will work with Mr. Whitney, Treasurer, to purchase bonds. Discussion followed.

Ms. Liou suggested Mr. Simonelli revise the financial reports to include a profit/loss statement from budget to actual on the income-expense report and remove the transaction detail report from future meeting packets since its more of a general ledger. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will revise the reports for the next meeting.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Executive Director Review and Contract

TABELED.

6. Remote Well Reading Device Update

Mr. Simonelli stated that all 30 additional units purchased from BluCloud have been installed throughout the city. Discussion followed. Topics covered included:

- Images of an installed unit.
- 7 of the 30 units are currently not responding.
- Trust working with BluCloud to determine why units are not responding.
- New cloud interface for public interface.

7. Current Website Design

Mr. Simonelli reviewed the Trust website through the years. He displayed images of previous versions as well as of the current version (last updated in 2017.) Discussion followed.

The Board's comments included:

- Have more background detail on what the groundwater level issue is and what the Trust does.
- Videos on the landing page are useful – easy for folks to get a nice overview of the focus of the Trust's work in one place.
- Make menu bar more visible.
- Include quotes from elected officials, residents, forum quotes, etc.
- Consolidating the menu options into fewer options, with some subheadings as needed – as-is, seems wordy/crowded when upon opening the menu.
- Rename Organization as "Board and Staff.
- Look into providing a better/slicker way to present the information.

Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will edit the existing layout and bring it back to the Board for review in January.

8. Annual Report Review

Mr. Simonelli reviewed a draft, revised introduction for the annual report. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will circulate the annual report draft, tax return, and financial statements from Raphael & Raphael to the Trustees for review.

9. Executive Director's Report

BGwT Executive Director Mr. Christian Simonelli distributed his report. Discussion followed. Refer to the attached *Executive Director's Report November 16th, 2023*, for a complete list of activities.

10. Other Business

Mr. Simonelli noted the City's release of a document which reviews the zoning code and proposes a reform of the zoning code. Discussion followed. Mr. Simonelli will email the Trustees a copy of the report along with a reminder to review the Trust website for discussion at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Simonelli noted that he will follow-up with the City Clerk regarding new Trustee appointments and reappointments of existing Trustees.

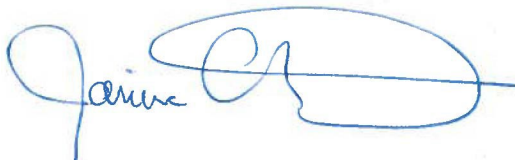
Mr. Whitney moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Saunders seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28pm

NEXT MEETING: January 18th, 2024 @ 4:00 pm, at the Lenox Hotel with a virtual attendance option.

Notes submitted by Christian Simonelli, BGwT Executive Director, 11/28/2023.

Approved 11 January 2024



J Commerford, Secretary

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

November 16th, 2023

1. **Readings** – Rehired field engineer from 2022. Started our 6th set of readings for 2023. Depending on the weather may get another set in before the end of the year.
2. **Meetings and Calls – (Virtual Via Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams platforms)**
 - a. Virtually met with the City's Green Infrastructure (GI) Working Groups on the following dates:
 - i. GI Coordination/Maintenance: 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, & 11/3
 - ii. GI Policy: 9/29,10/13,10/27, 11/10
 - iii. GI Working Group: 11/12 (Note: In the field for a tour of Audubon Circle.)
 - b. Virtually met with John Weil, Program Manager for Downtown Conversions, BPDA, and Reuben Kantor, Senior Advisor for Strategy and Operations, BPDA, to discuss residential conversion in the Downtown area including the Leather District, Fort Point Channel, and Bulfinch Triangle. (9/26)
 - c. Virtually attended the Boston Water & Sewer Commission meeting. (9/27)
 - d. Virtually met with all members of the City-State Groundwater Working Group. (10/19).
 - e. Virtually met with Kelvin Wong, P.E., Haley & Aldrich, Inc., to review the work of the Trust. (10/20)
 - f. Met with field representatives from GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. to review and adjust flow rate at Appleton Street recharge system in the South End. (10/24)
 - g. Virtually attended the Boston Water & Sewer Commission meeting. (10/25)
 - h. Connected with Ralph Kurpeski, ISD Building Inspector Ward 5B, to discuss below-grade work at 2A-4A Milford Street in the South End. (10/26)
 - i. Met with Hannah Lyons-Galante, Climate Change Resiliency Specialist, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to review station pump data and their efforts on combating climate change. (10/25)
 - j. I testified, in person, before the Boston City Council's Committee on Environmental Justice, Resiliency & Parks on an order for a hearing on stormwater management and flood hazard mitigation in the City of Boston. (10/30)
 - k. Met with Rubert Qua, resident of 717 Atlantic Avenue, to discuss infrastructure in the area of his building. (11/1)
 - l. Virtually attended for the scoping session for the 142-146 St. Mary's Street project located in the Fenway. (11/7)
 - m. Virtually testified, at the Zoning Board of Appeals hearings in September, October, and November.
 - n. Communicated with residents, engineers, attorneys, & developers throughout the GCOD to discuss ZBA procedures and advised them on what they need to submit to meet the GCOD zoning.
3. **BluCloud Automated Readers Update-** I virtually met with Daniel McCormack and Justin Comeau of BluCloud on 9/28, 10/12, & 11/8 to review the performance of the 30 units deployed. 23 of the 30 units are functioning and recording readings daily. 7 of the units stopped reading at various time intervals. We're currently working with BluCloud to determine the cause.

Updates to our Stormwater Program

Boston Water and Sewer Commission
November 16, 2023

Discussion with Boston Groundwater Trustees



Stormwater regulations drive costs

- BWSC is committed to a clean, restored Boston Harbor and its tributaries—the Charles, Neponset, and Mystic Rivers
- BWSC has a consent decree with EPA and Conservation Law Foundation to keep making improvements...meet TMDL for Charles River through increased Green Infrastructure Improvements
- These stormwater regulations drive costs higher
- This has led us to propose changes to how we recover costs from customers to tie the rate structure more closely to how stormwater runoff impacts the stormwater system

A fair way to charge

- Current BWSC customers pay for stormwater as part of sewer service charges
- Many properties citywide that use BWSC's stormwater services do not pay anything for stormwater because they do not use our water/sewer services
- A fairer way to charge for stormwater is to closely relate the charge to a property's demand for stormwater service
- Impervious area is closely related to a property's demand for stormwater service
- Implementing a stormwater charge based on impervious surface will add over 5,000 new accounts to help pay for this expense



A better way to charge

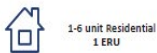
- Directly related to how much a property contributes to stormwater runoff
- Everyone pays, including properties like parking lots that haven't been paying a sewer charge
- Charging this way is a best practice for stormwater utilities because it is more equitable
- BWSC will use Geographic Information System (GIS) data to determine impervious area on properties



How will our customers be charged?

ERU = Equivalent Residential Unit
1 ERU = 2,164 square feet of impervious area
Proposed stormwater rate +/- \$8.98 per ERU
Proposed sewer rate decrease

Small Residential Properties (SRP)



1-6 unit Residential
1 ERU

Non-Small Residential Properties (NSRP)



7+ unit Residential
Charged by # of ERU



Institutional
Charged by # of ERU



Commercial and Industrial
Charged by # of ERU

Impacts to customers

- Estimated 60% of all will see a reduction in their monthly bill
- Approximately 9000 "new" customers for stormwater only (no water or sewer connections on property)
- The discounts we already provide to elderly and disabled customers for water and sewer bills will also apply to the stormwater charge.





Lowering customers' costs

There are 3 Ways to Help Our Customers Manage Stormwater and Lower Their Bill



30% discount for elderly and disabled customers will also apply to the stormwater charge



Proposed 30% credit available for customers that meet standards for stormwater retention and infiltration



Proposed grants of up to \$4,000 for property owners through the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Assistance Grant Program (RDA)

Depending on eligibility, discounts and credits can be used together or separately to achieve a maximum 40% reduction in the stormwater charge.



Bill estimator

BWSC Stormwater Parcel Viewer

Enter address then click on your parcel to determine EP

City Hall Ave, Boston, MA, 0...

Search results

41 SCADOCK ST BOSTON 02134

Parcel ID	00086400
Stormwater Type	AGRP
ERA	10
Impervious Area(SQ.FT)	20279.61811

[Bill Estimator](#)

[LINK](#)



Green Infrastructure Map

<https://www.bwsc.org/environment-education/maproom/green-infrastructure>



NEW PERMIT REQUIREMENTS ON THE HORIZON

EPA Residual Designation Authority

Certain commercial, industrial and institutional properties with one or more acres of impervious area (hard surfaces such as parking lots, roofs and roadways) will be required to obtain coverage under an EPA Clean Water Act permit.

Once permits are issued, property owners will be required to take steps to reduce pollutants in stormwater.



Contact Us

- **Capital Improvement Plan Hearing Tuesday, November 21, 2023 @ 6:00 pm**
- **Rate Hearing Tuesday, December 12, 2023 @ 6:00 pm**

Phone: 617-989-7995
 Email: stormwaterinfo@bwsc.org
 Website: bwsc.org/stormwater

