

Boston Groundwater Trust

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September 11, 2012

Mr. John FitzGerald, Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: 1085 Boylston Street

Dear Mr. FitzGerald:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Small Project Review Application for 1085 Boylston Street. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of Boston where the integrity of building foundations is threatened by low groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. Therefore, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

As stated in the SPRA, the project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established under Article 32 of the Zoning Code. I am pleased with the proponent's commitment to meeting the recharge requirements in the GCOD and look forward to seeing their plans for doing so before the project goes before the Board of Appeals.

In addition to recharge requirements, Article 32 also requires that a project show that it will have no negative effects on groundwater levels on the site or on adjoining lots. While the project will have a one level below grade parking garage, the proponent asserts that the building will have no impact on groundwater levels and will require no dewatering during construction because it will be built above the current groundwater elevation. Although the SPRA includes several section drawings that indicate a basement depth of 9 feet below the ground floor level, there is no information relating the elevation to Boston City Base that would allow one to relate the building elevations to those that the Trust reports for groundwater levels. It would be helpful to have this information in hand before decisions are made on the building. Article 32 requires a certification stamped by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts showing why the project will not have a negative impact on area groundwater levels. Information on building elevations relative to Boston City Base should be part of this analysis, which should also be provided before the project goes before the Board of Appeals.

I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to assure that the project can have only positive impacts on area groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED