

Boston Groundwater Trust

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August 30, 2012

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

Subject: 1282 Boylston Street

Dear Mr. FitzGerald:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Project Change and PDA Text Amendment for 1282 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.

I am pleased that the proponent acknowledges that the project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established in Article 32 of the Zoning Code and commits to meeting the recharge requirements in the GCOD and submitting the letter from BWSC that will confirm the requirements are met.

In addition, I am pleased to have received the stamped August 24, 2012 letter from Brian Sweeney stating that the project will have no negative impact on area groundwater levels. As noted in the letter, the project includes a three level underground garage. According to the letter, the basement wall will be founded in the clay, providing a groundwater cut-off that eliminates the potential path for groundwater to drain from the upper aquifer. The letter also states that the cast-in-place basement walls will be fully waterproofed, and that the continuous interlocking steel sheeting that serves as temporary excavation support will be left in place as an additional groundwater cut-off wall. Further, the letter states that if the basement walls are constructed as slurry walls rather than cast-in-place concrete, they will extend at least five feet into the clay to serve as the groundwater cut-off wall. As I stated in my July 29, 2011 comment letter on the PNF for the project, the excavation will extend through the relatively impervious organic layer that is above the clay; therefore it is imperative that the design of any backfilling not allow a path that can let water drain along the edge of the structure and through the organic layer.

Again as I stated in my comment letter on the PNF, it would probably be valuable to install additional observation wells near the project, at locations chosen in consultation with the Trust, to allow groundwater levels to be monitored so that any drop in levels that may be caused by the project will be discovered and remedied before it can cause any harm to nearby buildings supported on wood pile foundations. Wells should be monitored for six months

prior to construction to establish a baseline and read weekly during below grade construction. The readings should be shared promptly with the Trust and the Authority. A protocol should be in place to define the actions that must be taken in the case of any significant drop in observed groundwater levels to eliminate the potential for harm.

I appreciate the proponent's responsiveness to my concern that the certification letter had not been received prior to submission of the NPC. I look forward to continuing to work with the proponent, their consultants, and the Authority to assure that the project can have only positive impacts on local groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED