

February 14, 2006

Ms. Maria Faria, Assistant Director for Housing
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Subject: 212 Stuart Street

Dear Ms. Faria:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Small Project Review Application for 212 Stuart Street.

The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the city where building foundations are threatened by reduced groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. As such, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

The proposed is located in a sensitive area for groundwater, on the edge of Bay Village and near one of the largest groundwater depressions in Boston. It is therefore particularly important that it not have the potential to reduce groundwater levels in the area.

I was disappointed when I read, on page 3-13 of the SPRA, that the proponent intended to install an underslab drainage system for the project. Although, according to the application, the drain “would be located above the current static groundwater table in the area”, it would have the effect of limiting a potential increase in that level that might be desirable to help maintain the strength of nearby pilings.

I spoke with the proponent and his geotechnical engineer about this concern both before and at the public meeting on the project held on February 1. I am pleased that the proponent has now committed in writing to utilize a waterproofed undergrade area, and that “An underslab drainage system will not be used for this purpose”. In order to assure the effectiveness of the waterproofing, I ask that, after completion, the project be required to file an annual certification by a registered professional engineer that there has been no pumping from the subgrade areas in the prior year.

I am also pleased that the proponent has committed to installing a groundwater monitoring well in the sidewalk on Shawmut Street prior to construction. The well, to be built to Boston Groundwater Trust specifications, will be monitored before and during construction; and measurements will be turned over to the Trust. Upon completion of the Project, the well will be turned over to the Trust for incorporation into our monitoring network.

I ask that the commitments outlined above be included in any approvals that the Authority issues for this project.

I appreciate the willingness of the proponent to work with us on this issue. I look forward to continuing to work with the proponent and the Authority on groundwater related issues as the project moves forward.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: John Walser, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED