

February 5, 2010

Secretary Ian Bowles
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Attn: MEPA Office – Purvi Patel
EOEEA #14534
100 Cambridge St, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Subject: 275 Albany Street

Dear Secretary Bowles:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Notification Form for 275 Albany Street. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the city 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 ENF, the project is located in Boston's Groundwater Conservation Overlay District. I am pleased with the commitment of the proponent, as stated in the ENF and repeated at the BRA scoping session, to meet the GCOD requirements.

The project, according to the proponents, includes a limited amount of below ground construction, with a portion of the garage projecting no more than five feet below the surface. I am pleased that the ENF includes a commitment to waterproof the exterior walls that extend below observed and predicted groundwater levels.

As discussed in the scoping session, the proponent plans to install the required recharge system on the Traveler Street side of the project. Because of the location of nearby wood piling supported buildings, it would be more useful if the recharge were located on the East Berkeley Street side. I am pleased that the proponent agreed during the scoping session to study the possibility of shifting some or all of the recharge to this side and look forward to working with the proponents and their consultants to find an effective location.

In the ENF, the proponent also agreed to install groundwater observation wells in the vicinity of the project to monitor levels before, during, and after construction. These wells should be installed, if possible, on public property, built to BGwT standards, and turned over to the Trust after construction for incorporation into our observation well network. Readings taken before and during construction should be provided promptly to the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Trust so that we can be sure that no negative impact is occurring. I appreciate the proponent's offer to install the wells and look forward to working with the proponent to determine the best locations.

I look forward to working with the proponent to assure that this project can have only positive impacts on groundwater levels in this section of the South End.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director