

# Boston Groundwater Trust

229 Berkeley St, Fourth Floor, Boston, MA 02116  
617.859.8439 voice – 617.266.8750 fax  
www.bostongroundwater.org

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Elliott Laffer

October 4, 2012

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

Subject: 45-53 Hereford Street

Dear Mr. FitzGerald:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Small Project Review Application for 45-53 Hereford 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 by the proponent, the project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established under Article 32 of the Zoning Code. I acknowledge the proponent's stated commitment to meet the requirements of the GCOD. The project is surrounded by buildings supported on wood pilings, including those structures on Hereford Street that will be incorporated into the newly consolidated lot. There has been some stress related to piling deterioration on at least one nearby structure, so maintaining, or hopefully increasing, groundwater levels in the area is very important.

I acknowledge the proponent's recognition, confirmed to me by their attorney after the Authority's public meeting on the project, that the recharge requirements of the GCOD apply to the entire consolidated site, not just to the areas of new construction. While the amount of unoccupied space on the site is relatively small, the proponent will need to design and install a system sized to meet the full requirements of the GCOD, as all previous applicants in similar situations have done. As I stated during the meeting, to comply with Article 32 the proponent will also need to submit a letter stamped by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts that demonstrates that the project will cause no reduction in groundwater levels on site or on adjoining lots.

I am pleased with the proponent's commitment, stated in the SPRA, to work with the Trust to monitor groundwater levels before, during, and after construction. To do this most effectively, it would be helpful if the proponent installed at least one additional groundwater observation well, at a site on public property chosen in agreement with the Trust and built to our standards, that would be incorporated into our network after the project, as is City policy for any new groundwater observation wells installed on public property that the Trust feels would be useful to our mission.

I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to resolve all outstanding groundwater issues before the project goes before the Board of Appeals and to assuring 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