

Boston Groundwater Trust

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Elliott Laffer

March 22, 2012

Mr. Gerald Autler
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Boston Conservatory

Dear Mr. Autler:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Institutional Master Plan Notification Form for the Boston Conservatory. 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 restricted to groundwater related issues.

I am pleased that the proponent has specifically noted that the planned project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established under Article 32 of the Zoning Code and has committed to installing systems that will meet the recharge requirements mandated in the GCOD. The zoning also requires that the proponent file a certification stamped by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts that shows that the project will be designed so that it cannot cause a reduction in groundwater levels either on site or on adjoining lots. This is important in this location that is only a few blocks from wood piling supported buildings, probably including the Fenway Studios, where groundwater levels are more marginal than we have seen in the immediate vicinity of the project. Because the project is part of an Institutional Master Plan and will not go before the Board of Appeals, it is important that a clear commitment to filing this certification, if not the certification itself, be in place before final zoning is adopted. Since the proponent is now proposing to raze the existing structure and build a new building rather than renovate, it is even more important that thought be given to potential groundwater related consequences. In addition, care must be taken so that the planned future building that will occupy the remainder of the site does not interfere with the recharge system.

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