

Boston Groundwater Trust

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Elliott Laffer

March 8, 2012

Katelyn Sullivan
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Emmanuel College Institutional Master Plan

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Institutional Master plan for Emmanuel College. 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 recognized that the college is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established under Article 32 of the Zoning Code and has committed to meeting the requirements for construction in that area. In particular, I am pleased with the proponent's explicit recognition that projects be designed so that they will not result in a negative impact on groundwater levels on the lot or adjacent lots. There are historic nearby wood piling supported buildings including the Gardner Museum, the main building at Simmons College, and, likely, Emmanuel College's own Administration Building that make maintaining groundwater levels vitally important. Because, according to the IMP, one of the proposed buildings may include an underground garage, design and construction procedures that meet the no negative impact requirement are particularly important. As required under Article 32, the demonstration of no negative impact should come in a letter that is stamped by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts.

I am pleased, as well, that the proponent has met the GCOD requirements, including those for recharge, for those projects constructed since the zoning was put in place and has highlighted the benefits of this recharge in the IMP. I appreciate that, as stated in the IMP, they have met with the BGwT to review future projects and have committed to Best Management Practices in these projects.

As the projects are designed, I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to assure that they can only have positive impacts on area groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED