

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 11, 2006

- 1. City/State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group will meet again tomorrow. We will again lead off the agenda with an update on current conditions. Other agenda items include updates from BWSC on its capital planning, from the MBTA on plans for the St. Charles Street area and on its capital improvement plan groundwater expenditure, from DCR on the Storrow Drive underpass, from the MTA on apparent problem areas in East Boston, the North End, and along Herald Street, and from the BRA about the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District zoning.
- 2. Zoning** – The BRA has received and analyzed the comments on the GCOD proposal. They plan to have a meeting shortly with people outside the Authority who are concerned about the groundwater issue, including us, to go over potential refinements, which include an expansion of the original map. They plan to take a zoning proposal to their Board for approval on Jan. 26.
- 3. BWSC** – The sewer reconstruction and recharge system in the Hemenway St alley has not yet led to any increase in groundwater levels in that area. In fact, levels there generally dropped more than in any other area during the last interval between readings. John Sullivan does not yet have an answer about why that would have occurred. It will be explored in more detail during the Working Group meeting.
- 4. DCR** – The DCR continues to work on the design of the replacement Storrow Drive underpass, including necessary traffic diversion during construction. Press reports have made clear that groundwater issues are among those that must be addressed. Other groups in the area, including the Esplanade Association and the Back Bay Association have raised serious issues about potential effects during the construction process, which may take three years or more. We should get more details at the Working Group meeting.
- 5. MBTA** – The T has included \$2.97 million for groundwater remediation work in their five year draft capital improvement plan. The bulk of the money would be spent in FY2008, with \$60,000 earmarked for FY2007, presumably for planning. The projects to be pursued are not identified in the plan. I spoke at a public hearing on the CIP in favor of the allocation and thanked the T for moving to become part of the solution to the problem.
- 6. MTA** – The Turnpike Authority has hired a consultant to evaluate the information discovered during their investigation of the Sumner Tunnel approach in East Boston for potential leakage. We will get a copy of the report; no current leakage is indicated, and the approach was built as a waterproof wall with no drainage. The MTA will also be evaluating approaches to the Callahan Tunnel in the North End in response to reports of reduced groundwater levels in that area. They have found one relatively small leak in their structure in the area near Herald Street, which will be repaired. This could be the cause of low groundwater in that area. The CA/T will make final arrangements to turn over to us five wells that we have identified as potentially useful to our network.

7. **St. Charles St** – I spoke with a staff person for Speaker DiMasi who assures me that the funds for the work in the St. Charles Street area will be in the supplemental budget when it comes out of the conference committee. Timing remains somewhat uncertain because of other major priorities in the Legislature. A meeting among Jim Lambrechts, John Sullivan, and a consultant for the T took place last month to discuss more details of potential solutions, including that put forward in the Wentworth project.
8. **Well Installation** – We have installed the first of the wells in East Boston. Because of our inability to install about 40 of our originally planned wells, the Technical Advisory Committee will consider potential alternate sites at its next meeting. Construction work will resume in April.
9. **Well reversion** – We have received complete documentation from the Trilogy project for the four wells that they have turned over to us, including installation details, rim elevations, and historic readings (which we had also received during construction). The wells will be in our network for the next readings in February.
10. **Children’s Museum** – In my comments on the Children’s Museum’s planned expansion and renovation project, I had suggested that they look into the possibility of recharging from their existing roof to Sleeper Street and also look into potential educational programs that would show the importance of groundwater to the buildings of Boston. The Secretary of EOE, in her findings letter, suggested that the Museum work with us. I testified at the public hearing on their application for a Chapter 91 Waterways license last week and raised both issues again. I’ll be meeting with the COO of the Museum on Friday to discuss how best to incorporate these ideas. I think that we might be able to get an exhibit.
11. **Website** – The readings on the website have been updated on a rolling basis as they are received and checked. The entire process is much easier to implement, especially as the number of readings has grown. I continue to get positive feedback on the site. Traffic remains pretty steady at the higher levels that we reached last year.
12. **EPA Grant** – The City is in the final stages of putting together its application for use of the US EPA funds earmarked in the last budget. I have been in discussions with Jim Hunt and Nancy Grilk about details. This should be finalized shortly.
13. **Course for Christian** – We are making plans for Christian to take a course at Wentworth this quarter on Soils and Foundations. This will give us additional in house expertise as we get increasingly involved in the approval process on significant projects. The course runs from next week to late April, and will conclude just as installation season begins again.
14. **Press** – The Associated Press story on Boston’s groundwater problem ran in newspapers around New England in mid-December (it’s posted on our website). It appeared this week in a paper in Raleigh, NC. There was also a groundwater story in the Courant in December.
15. **Comment Letters** – I filed comments on the Museum of Fine Arts and on Simmons College. I expect to be filing in the next month on new projects at 346-354 Congress Street in the Fort Point Channel area and at 212 Stuart Street in Bay

Village. I will also be filing followup comments on the Children's Museum's application for a Chapter 91 Waterways license.

- 16. 501(c)3** – We continue to await the approval letter from the IRS, which has said that it has 200 days to review our application. Our attorney, Bruce Wickersham, has advised that there is no good way to push the IRS, and that efforts to do so would likely be counterproductive. We have received an extension for our taxes. The return is complete in draft form and will be filed upon receipt of the approval letter.
- 17. Funding** – I have invoiced for the remaining \$71,000 in operating funds from the City for this fiscal year and expect to receive it shortly. I will also follow up with BWSC about a contribution; they operate on a calendar year.
- 18. Level Logging Equipment** – We have resolved the hardware and software glitches on the new level logging equipment. However, we are still learning how to install it to get the most effective readings. We should have readings from over twenty key wells before the next meeting.