

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 27, 2011

1. **City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group met on January 20. Attendance and participation, as always, were excellent. Details from the agency reports are included below.
2. **MBTA** – The MBTA is negotiating terms and conditions with GZA for their tunnel repair design contract. They hope that the contract, for in which one of the earliest projects is design of the long term solution for low groundwater in the area near Back Bay Station, will be signed and the engineer given authorization to proceed by April. The plan remains to focus on repairing the leak rather than making up water.
3. **BWSC** – BWSC is continuing to work on the low groundwater problem near the corner of Richmond and Commercial Streets in the North End; they have completed repairs on one sewer line in Richmond Street, but we have not seen an increase in water levels. Farther up Commercial Street, near its intersection with Atlantic Avenue, BWSC repairs appear to have led to a substantial increase in groundwater level. BWSC has completed a television of a brick 72” combined sewer line in Dartmouth Street that showed signs of infiltration and will conduct a similar inspection of a nearby 36” sanitary sewer line; repairs here will be a major focus in an effort to raise the low groundwater levels that have spread over a substantial nearby area in the Back Bay. Repair of a leaking sewer line in Blagdon Street behind the Boston Public Library has been held up by the need to find and test a liner material that will stand up to the heat generated by an adjacent steam line. An inspection of a sewer line under Haviland Street in the Fenway has indicated leakage; that sewer is planned for relining later this year. BWSC continues to inspect lines under Fairfield and Berkeley Streets and near the corner of Albany Street and Union Park in an attempt to find the cause of low groundwater in those areas.
4. **MWRA** – MWRA has reviewed the records of their video inspection of the Boston Marginal Conduit and has found no signs of leakage that could be a contributor to low groundwater levels near Storrow Drive.
5. **MassDOT** – As part of a paving project in the Prudential tunnel on the Turnpike, MassDOT this summer will clean a drain line servicing the tunnel. This will allow inspection of the drain line (which has not been cleaned out since the Turnpike extension was built in the 1960’s) to see if there are leaks there that could be contributing to low groundwater levels in the Back Bay and Bay Village near the Turnpike. MassDOT continues to look at potential recharge applications for storm water from the Central Artery.
6. **East Boston** – Groundwater levels in the area near Porter Street and Visconti Road where MWRA has removed a sewer line from its network as part of their overall replumbing of the area and filled in the pipe continue to rise. Many of the wells show increases of 3 feet or more from their formerly consistently low readings.
7. **GCOD** – Compliance with GCOD remains excellent. We have now seen over 200 cases go through the Board of Appeals, with only three very justified variances granted. The BRA has made sure that projects in the GCOD area that were approved prior to its adoption but require modified zoning because of project changes in light of the changed economy meet GCOD requirements. The BRA has also made sure that those projects that are part of Institutional Master Plans or Planned Development

Areas and don't go before the Board of Appeals still meet all of the requirements of the GCOD.

- 8. Research Project** – The Tufts researchers will be presenting a report at today's trustees' meeting on their Trust sponsored project to determine the impact of recharge as mandated by the GCOD requirements on groundwater levels.
- 9. Website** – Traffic to the website has been quite high since the holidays. We continue to hear compliments about the information available and its presentation.
- 10. Meetings** – I've attended two meetings on the potential recharge from the Central Artery, including one of the Technical Advisory Committee of the City-State Groundwater Working Group. I attended scoping sessions on the Fenway Triangle mixed use project, the redesigned Parcel 24 Chinatown housing project, the expansion plans for the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, and the housing project planned for the Boston Garden Garage site. I met with the Worcester Square Neighborhood Association to discuss groundwater levels in their South End neighborhood. Jim Lambrechts and I presented to a meeting of home inspectors to tell them some of the signs to look for in groundwater sensitive areas and why they were important; we got very positive feedback from attendees.
- 11. Comment Letters** – I have written comments on the Fenway Triangle project. As always, comments are posted on our website.
- 12. Publicity** – The Back Bay Sun did a profile piece on my work with the Trust and included suggestions for things that homeowners can do to address the issue. The Boston Courant wrote an article on solution of the high groundwater issue in the Newmarket area that included our role in helping to solve the problem.