

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

February 15, 2006

- 1. City/State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group met on Jan. 12. The group continues to exchange information, with all parties sending high level staff. The Commissioner of DCR addressed the group about the Storrow Drive project. Details from the agencies are listed below.
- 2. Zoning** – The Groundwater Conservation Overlay District went before the Zoning Commission this morning. Everyone who testified was very positive about establishing the district and wanted to be included in it. In spite of some efforts that were made over the last week, including a letter committing to a process and timetable from Jim Hunt and Mark Maloney to Speaker DiMasi, Senate President Traviglino, and Councilor Scappichio, there were a group of people who asked that the zoning be pulled back until the study areas could be included. The Commission voted to adopt the zoning as presented (they cannot amend a petition) and to separately send a letter to the BRA asking that the process for considering the study areas be expedited and that they get monthly reports on its progress.
- 3. BWSC**- They have budget approval for the lining and rehabilitation of the West Side Interceptor under Beacon Street from Dartmouth Street to Charles Street and under a portion of Charles Street; work should be done this summer. They are currently doing repair work on the St. James Avenue sewer which could be a cause of drawdown on Stuart Street. They expect to go out for bids on the reconstruction of the Back Street sewer this spring. They are holding retention pending repair of problems in the sewer and recharge system behind Hemenway Street; at BWSC's invitation, I observed the video work on this sewer which showed multiple leaks to be repaired. They expect to contract for a video survey of all of their low sewer lines, with an emphasis on groundwater "hot spots" first.
- 4. DCR** – I attended a briefing by DCR on the Storrow Drive project, as well as a public meeting. DCR has put forward several potential solutions and hope to eliminate those that are not considered feasible/acceptable before studying the others in detail. They will do a full draft and final Environmental Impact Report. Final alternative must be selected by about one year from now. They have committed that the project will be designed to eliminate the possibility of groundwater drawdown off site during construction. After completion they have committed that, at worst, the design will be such that it can have no negative impact on surrounding groundwater levels. They are studying how much they can recharge, with the possibility that all water, whether groundwater or rainwater, that drains from the tunnel (assuming there is one) would be recharged across the old seawall.
- 5. MBTA** – The T has hired a consultant to work on groundwater issues. He has begun meeting with Jim Lambrechts and John Sullivan to discuss a coordinated solution to problems at the St. Charles Street area that would be funded by the supplemental state budget. The T has also committed an additional \$2.97 million in their draft capital plan to address T related groundwater issues.

6. **St. Charles St** – The supplemental budget that is to contain funding for work to attempt to raise the groundwater levels in the St. Charles Street is still being worked on in the Legislature. It is likely to be considered after completion of work on the health care bill. I am assured that the funds remain as part of the bill.
7. **Well Installation** – The Technical Advisory Committee met to discuss, among other things, siting for wells to replace those that could not be installed because of obstacles. We will be installing several additional wells in the North End as soon as the construction moratorium ends in April, then proceed to the Faneuil Hall area, then to East Boston, and finally to some additional work in the Fenway and the South End. We will select a well to be the final one installed under the Environmental Bond Bill; it will likely be in the South End; we will plan for some sort of celebratory ceremony.
8. **Audit** – The DEP audited our performance on the US EPA grant that we received last year. They were very pleased with how we handled the contract.
9. **Children’s Museum** – I met with the Chief Operating Officer of the museum to discuss groundwater issues. They have committed to build a recharge system as part of the open space area they will be operating adjacent to the museum on Sleeper Street. They also committed to working with us to fund and design an outdoor exhibit on both a child and an adult level about the importance of the groundwater issue in Boston and the Fort Point Channel area.
10. **212 Stuart Street** – I attended a public meeting as part of the BRA’s Small Project Review for this building on the edge of Bay Village. Prior to the meeting I spoke with the geotech engineer and later with the developer. They have agreed in writing to modify their foundation design to eliminate underdrains, using a fully waterproofed slab. They will also install an observation well in front of the project on Shawmut Street.
11. **Website** – Traffic on the website remains steady at the higher levels we have seen for the last year. We have made a few more tweaks to improve the ease of uploading data.
12. **EPA Grant** – The City continues to work on final details of the uses for the EPA grant. Nancy Grilk is heading this up for Jim Hunt, and I continue to work with both of them on this. We will likely be the implementer of projects funded by the grant.
13. **Press** – There have been several stories in the local press about the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District zoning, including a major story in last Sunday’s Boston Globe City Section.
14. **Comment Letters** – I filed comments on the Children’s Museum, 346-354 Congress Street and 212 Stuart Street projects. All are or will soon be posted to the website.
15. **501(c)3** – We have filed our tax return based on having 501(c)3 status. This was based on the advice of both our accountant and our attorney. We are still awaiting final approval from the IRS on our status.
16. **Funding** – We received the \$71,000 from the City that completes their operating funding commitment for this fiscal year. I still expect to hear shortly from BWSC on a grant to match those provided in other years. We have begun work on the budget process for FY2007.

- 17. Level Logging Equipment** – We have gotten the first data from our level logging equipment. Based on the advice of the Technical Advisory Committee, we will leave these in place for two months to see what variations occur. We have identified sites for many of the loggers to move to next.
- 18. Build Boston** – I am trying to put together a panel on groundwater issues for the Boston Society of Architects Build Boston conference in November. I have tentative agreements to participate from Jim Hunt, the BRA, the Beal Company, and Jim Lambrechts. I would moderate. We will discuss what the issue is and its importance, the City's response, the new zoning, and the way the Clarendon project is addressing the issue. Tim Mitchell was invited by the BSA to see if there was a good fit for this topic this year. I think this will be a good opportunity to speak to design professionals in the City about how they can help to solve this issue.