

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

March 22, 2007

1. **City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Technical Advisory Committee to the Working Group will be meeting twice in the near future. One meeting will be to evaluate the potential recharge systems to be installed as part of the Storrow Drive reconstruction project and the other to review and advise on alternate proposals for increasing groundwater levels in the South End near Back Bay Station. These meetings showcase additional ways in which this City-State collaboration has been critical in addressing the groundwater problem.
2. **Zoning** – The BRA Board has endorsed the extension of the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District in modified form to portions of the North End and the Fort Point Channel neighborhood. The petition will be heard by the Boston Zoning Commission on March 28.
3. **BWSC** – The work on Back Street has resumed after a hiatus during the coldest part of the winter. The video inspection of all of the low sewers in areas of groundwater concern is nearing completion. BWSC is studying how to address an apparent leak in the North End near an area of low groundwater.
4. **DCR** – DCR will be meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee of the City-State Groundwater Working Group to consider possible recharge systems to meet the groundwater recharge commitments they have made for the Storrow Drive reconstruction project. They are looking at ways to utilize the system that BWSC is installing in Back Street. They are also looking at the possibility of installing a recharge system before construction, as either an interim measure or as part of the permanent system.
5. **MBTA** – The Action Team for the T's project to raise groundwater levels in the South End near Cazenove Street, of which we are a part, is trying to decide between two alternate means of addressing the problem. The Technical Advisory Committee of the City-State Groundwater Working Group will be assisting in this process. Both recharge wells installed by the T have raised nearby groundwater levels. The indication of a lack of increase on Cazenove Street turned out to be an instrumentation problem with our data logger which has been corrected.
6. **MTA** – The MTA will be inspecting its drains in the area of Exeter Street and Huntington Avenue when the weather warms. There has been a drop in levels at that corner in recent months.
7. **East Boston** – Groundwater levels in the area of depressed readings along Porter Street and Visconti Road have been increasing slowly for the last few months. Hopefully this is a result of the repairs done by MWRA, with the slowness of the increase due to lack of recharge through the hard surfaces in the area.
8. **Columbus Center** – It now looks like it will be summer before the wells along the Turnpike are installed. Columbus Center has been trying to reactivate one well behind 95 Berkeley Street that would be helpful in understanding what is happening in the Back Bay Station area recharge.
9. **The Clarendon** – We expect to receive shortly the report the project has commissioned from Haley and Aldrich about why groundwater levels are low in

the area. Based on what I have heard informally from H&A, I think that the document will be very thorough.

- 10. Fort Point Channel Neighborhood** – Our latest readings last week indicated a significant drop in most of the wells along Congress Street, with the biggest drop to the lowest level occurring at a well at Pittsburgh Street. After checking with BWSC, it turns out that a nearby project has been dewatering (with a permit) and has pumped over 3,000,000 gallons since January. This points up the need for the new zoning to require that projects not have a negative impact on groundwater levels in the area.
- 11. Neighborhood Meeting** – I met this week with a group of neighbors from Montgomery Street in the South End who are concerned about new very low water levels at a well on the street. We discussed the groundwater problem and potential solutions in general and also some possible causes of the change on their block. This was a productive small group way to answer neighbors' questions and raise their consciousness about the issue.
- 12. Website** – Traffic on the website was very heavy in February and has exceeded those levels so far in March. In fact, so far March is averaging the most daily hits except for April and May of 2005 (right around the groundwater forum) and the most daily visits ever. Video from the September well reading ceremony is now posted to the site.
- 13. Research Projects** – We have joined the Gordon Center for SubSurface Sensing and Imaging Systems managed by Northeastern University. The project to investigate remote sensing as a better method to locate pile tops and possibly condition will be conducted this spring, led by professors at NU and BU. We should have a report by June. The Wentworth project to study potential less expensive ways of supporting lighter buildings with rotted pilings, led by Jim Lambrechts, will probably take place during the fall and winter semesters.
- 14. Press** – There are new articles from the Boston Globe and South End News posted to the website.
- 15. Comment Letters** – I have filed comments on projects at 100 Beacon Street, Wheelock College, and Children's Hospital, all of which are posted on our website. I expect to file comments soon on projects at Waterside Place, 311 Summer Street, and Tufts School of Dental Medicine.