

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 29, 2011

- 1. City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group met yesterday. Attendance was a little lighter than usual, but all agencies except the MBTA were represented. Details below.
- 2. MBTA** – The MBTA was unable to have a representative at the Working Group session. They are expected to file a written update shortly. They had anticipated signing the design contract for their tunnel repair project that includes the long term plan for raising groundwater levels in the South End near Back Bay Station during April.
- 3. BWSC** – BWSC repaired a manhole leak on Dartmouth Street that was a potential cause of the low groundwater levels there; unfortunately, levels have not risen. Within a month they plan to do a relatively difficult television inspection of connections between the drains on Dartmouth Street and the West Side Interceptor under Beacon Street. Hopefully, that will reveal the overriding problem. BWSC has discovered a problem in the recharge gallery under Back Street between Berkeley and Clarendon Streets that caused water recharged into that gallery by DCR to drain away. The flaw, which was not discovered during the post-construction inspection, is to be fixed by this weekend. In the North End, BWSC discovered leaks in a pipe near Commercial and Richmond Streets, likely contributing to the low spot in that area; this will require lining a pipe there, which should happen by Fall. Also by Fall, BWSC expects to be able to make repairs to the Blagdon Street sewer line, located behind the Boston Public Library, that has been a possible cause of low groundwater in that area; repair of this pipe has been held up because of a need to solve technical problems involving an adjacent Trigen steam pipe.
- 4. MassDOT** – The cleaning and inspection of the drain line from the MassPike Prudential Tunnel, the first since it was installed almost 50 years ago, will start next month. This may lead to possible explanations for low spots along the Turnpike near Exeter Street in Back Bay and near Harrison Avenue in the South End.
- 5. East Boston** – Groundwater levels in wells along near Porter Street and Visconti Road have risen as much as six feet since MWRA completed their new sewer system in the area and filled in the old sewer pipe under Porter Street in September. The one well where there has not been an improvement is at the intersection of Porter and Breman Streets; MWRA will take another look at their infrastructure there to see if there could be a problem.
- 6. 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. Project proponents now understand the importance of compliance and have been generally very cooperative. There are now 134 recharge systems in service that were installed under GCOD.
- 7. Website** – Traffic to the website has remained high. We are investigating ways to make the site more user friendly for those utilizing tablet computers without a mouse.

- 8. Meetings** – I attended scoping sessions on the Winsor School and 41 Westland Avenue projects. I also met with proponents of the Berklee College of Music 168 Massachusetts Ave project, as well as the project planned for the Boston Herald site in the South End to discuss groundwater considerations. I met with the developers of the new Exeter Street tower at the Prudential Center to discuss the revised recharge system planned for Exeter Street that will handle infiltration mandated both for that project and the planned office building at 888 Boylston Street. I also attended the annual meeting of the Charles River Watershed Association to see our trustee Jim Hunt receive a well deserved award.
- 9. Comment Letters** – I filed comments on the Winsor School and 41 Westland Avenue projects. As always, they are posted on our website.