

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 20, 2006

- 1. Ceremony** – The ceremonial reading of our final well commemorating the completion of the basic well network funded under the Environmental Bond Bill is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 10:00 AM, on Chandler Street near Dartmouth Street and Columbus Avenue. Mayor Menino, Speaker DiMasi, and Chief of Commonwealth Development Gottlieb have confirmed their attendance, as have Reps. Rushing and Walz and Councilor Ross. Congressman Capuano will attend if he is in Boston, and I expect that we will see other government officials as well. The ceremony will last about half an hour. Gary Saunders will speak for the Trust.
- 2. Funding** – We have received a check from the City for the full amount committed to the Trust from the City budget for FY2007.
- 3. Zoning** – The Zoning Board of Appeals has worked out a procedure in which they make sure that BWSC has confirmed that recharge requirements are properly met before issuance of any final zoning approvals for projects that trigger GCOD. There has been no effort yet to provide less than the GCOD mandated recharge (this would require a variance rather than a conditional use permit). The ZBA continues to look to the Trust for input on GCOD cases. The City continues to study the value of extending the GCOD into those areas in the North End, Fort Point Channel area, East Boston, and Charlestown that were designated for further study when the GCOD was adopted. A decision on extension is planned for later this year.
- 4. BWSC** – Relining of the West Side Interceptor is almost complete. The Back Street sewer repair/reconstruction project should be the next one likely to have an impact in an area where we have concerns about low groundwater.
- 5. DCR** – The Storrow Drive Tunnel project is moving more slowly than originally planned, apparently because of delays in compiling and analyzing traffic data, which has been pushed back a couple of months. At this point, it is unclear if this project will proceed before rehabilitation of the Longfellow Bridge takes place.
- 6. MBTA** – The T has installed a new observation well on Chandler Street and has asked us to monitor several wells in the Back Bay Station area with data loggers. They also plan to manually read several of our other wells in the area at closer frequencies than we do. They hope to install their temporary recharge wells in October. There will be an update session on the project on Sept. 29.
- 7. MTA** – MTA groundwater repairs have slipped somewhat as their focus has been on the tunnel ceiling repairs. The new leadership of the Authority hasn't yet focused on the problem. However, the MTA remains committed to the repairs and is scheduled to brief me on current status on Sept. 22.
- 8. East Boston** – The area of low groundwater elevations around Porter Street has expanded slightly in our current readings, taken last week. We are still waiting to see a timetable from MWRA for the repairs that they need to do where two breeches were found in their line. We have also found a new area of very low groundwater along Maverick Street near Frankfort Street. This has appeared in our last two readings in a well that originally was around Elev 8 and has dropped over 8 feet. We don't yet have a potential cause pinpointed. Our new wells have also found an area of low groundwater near the Winthrop line; again, we have yet to isolate a potential cause.

- 9. Well Installation** – We hoped to complete the well installation contract under the Environmental Bond Bill last week but ran into some unanticipated underground obstacles. We have four wells to go and expect to be done later this week.
- 10. Website** – Traffic on the website declined during the summer, but remained at high levels historically. It has started to pick up in September. Working with our Technical Advisory Committee, I have just about completed a set of Frequently Asked Questions that I expect to send to Geoff for posting this week.
- 11. City Council** – I briefed, separately, the two newest Councilors, Sam Yoon and Salvatore LaMattina, on the groundwater issue. Both were very interested and have expressed a desire to learn more.
- 12. Boston Preservation Alliance** – On Sept. 16, I spoke on the groundwater issue at a conference in East Boston sponsored by the Boston Preservation Alliance. While attendance wasn't all that we might have hoped, those who were there were quite interested, and we had a good question and answer session after my presentation.
- 13. Children's Museum** – I met with the Museum COO and the chief exhibit designer to discuss a potential groundwater related exhibit. There are possibilities to address the issue both inside the museum (they have an exhibit on how the city grew that could be a fit) and on the wharf. I expect to have more discussions in the fall.
- 14. Potential Research Project** – I met at Northeastern University with the Chair of their Center for Subsurface Sensing and Imaging Systems and one of the other professors involved with the Center to discuss a potential project to develop technology to determine pile cut off elevations with less cost and disruption than is required to dig a test pit. They plan to do some preliminary investigation and get back with a proposal, if it seems feasible, to work with us on developing a system. If successful, this would allow us to better understand whether we should be aiming for different groundwater elevations in different neighborhoods. The technology would also allow property owners to more readily assess the level of concern they should have based on groundwater readings near their property.
- 15. Press** – There are new articles from the Boston Courant and the South End News posted on our website.
- 16. Comment Letters** – I filed comments on projects at Fort Point Channel and at Northeastern University; they are posted on the website. I expect to file comments later this month on the Jacob Wirth's Restaurant site and Apple Computer Store projects.
- 17. 501(c)3** – We received our final approval letter from the IRS.
- 18. Build Boston** – Our proposal for a panel on groundwater at the conference has been accepted. We'll be on Thursday, Nov. 16, from 5:30-7:00PM. Our panel is scheduled to include Jim Hunt, Jim Lambrechts, Peter Nichols of the Beal Companies, and Rick Shaklik of the BRA. I'll be the moderator. I'm hopeful that the time will allow many locals to attend after work. We will be meeting soon to coordinate the presentations.