

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 27, 2007

- 1. DCR** – The Storrow Drive advisory process was thrown somewhat off its anticipated track when the state reinstated consideration of a bypass road through a portion of the Esplanade. DCR has confirmed that they will implement repairs that will extend the life of the tunnel by at least five, and more likely ten, years. Recharge remains a commitment for the completed system, with a high likelihood that the interim recharge plan will be implemented. Final construction on Storrow may fall behind that on the Longfellow Bridge which appears to be in even more serious condition.
- 2. MBTA** – The recharge wells on St. Charles, Cazenove, and Berkeley Streets were turned back on in August. Levels have substantially recovered to their prior condition. Steve Poulos, Jim Lambrechts, and John Sullivan have met to discuss how the data gathered through operation of the recharge systems impacts the best long term solution for raising groundwater levels in the area. After they reach agreement, the T will reconvene the Technical Advisory Committee to the City-State Groundwater Working Group to see if it concurs, then take the agreed solution to the Action Team, a public meeting, and to the General Manager for implementation. These steps should all be completed this fall.
- 3. North End** – There will be a meeting of concerned agencies on October 9 to discuss groundwater issues in the North End, focused on the area around Fulton, Richmond, and Commercial Streets. There are locations in the area where very low groundwater readings are occurring close to where we have wells with much higher readings.
- 4. Prudential Center** – I met with the developers and their geotechnical engineer to discuss groundwater issues surrounding the two new buildings proposed for the Pru. Because the entire Center is surrounded by a relatively impervious sheet pile wall (the integrity of which was demonstrated during the Mandarin Oriental project), we would like the required recharge to be done outside the sheet piling. Most likely, this would be on Exeter Street for the residential tower and on Belvidere or Dalton Street for the office building. The project is currently in the Article 80 review process; comments will be filed in October.
- 5. New Well** – We will be installing a new well on Exeter Street near the Lenox Hotel, paid for by the hotel, to help it better understand some groundwater issues at the facility. The well, in the public sidewalk, will be incorporated into our network. It will be installed before the construction moratorium in November.
- 6. City Pilot Project** – The City is installing a pilot Low Impact Development project in Peabody Square in Dorchester in conjunction with the rebuilding of the Ashmont MBTA Station. Included will be permeable sidewalks and other measures that will allow DPW and the Parks department to study the viability of such measures in terms of installation and maintenance. Although not in an area of concern for wood pilings, the project will be helpful in understanding what can work and the costs involved.
- 7. City Council** – I met with Councilor Linehan, who now represents District 2 and chairs the committee responsible for groundwater related issues. He was very

supportive of the work of the Trust. I expect that we will enjoy a good relationship with him, as we did with his predecessor, Councilor Kelly.

- 8. Website** – Visits to the website dropped off sharply at the beginning of September and have not yet recovered. We have not seen this dropoff in September in the past; however, the number of visits is at around the level of September 2006. We have modified the data on the interactive map to differentiate those wells that are dry from those that are inaccessible. This became a significant issue in East Boston, where very low groundwater levels have left a significant number of wells dry. The Technical Advisory Committee has also been able to use this data to identify several wells that, because the impervious organic layer is at a relatively high elevation, are not giving us useful data; these wells will be decommissioned.
- 9. Research Projects** – Design work on the project to develop an alternative method of supporting a building with failed pilings continues. Our coop student, Cao Le, spends about half of his time on the project, with the rest spent reading wells. We are working with Jim Hunt's office and the Department of Neighborhood Development to secure a site at which a system can be installed. Funding will likely be provided by the City using the EPA grant funds. While we have not yet seen success in the project to develop a method to sense pile cap elevations remotely, the researchers are planning to go back into the lab with a modified approach that they are hopeful will yield positive results.
- 10. Community Meetings** – I met again with the groundwater committee of the North End Waterfront Residents Association. I'll be meeting with West End Civic Association's Zoning and Planning Committee on October 1.