

# Boston Groundwater Trust

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Elliott Laffer

January 24, 2011

Mr. John FitzGerald, Project Manager  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Square,  
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Fenway Triangle Mixed Use Project

Dear Mr. FitzGerald:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Project Notification Form for the Fenway Triangle Mixed Use Project. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the City where the integrity of building foundations is threatened by low groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. Therefore, my comments are restricted to groundwater related issues.

I am pleased with the proponent's commitment to meet all of the standards imposed under Article 32. I appreciate the commitment to meet with the Trust, among others, to work out the details of the extensive recharge systems required under the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District zoning.

The GCOD zoning also requires that the proponent demonstrate that the design of the project will not have a negative impact on area groundwater levels. Because the project includes a three level underground garage below the Boylston Street building, special care must be taken to meet this standard.

The proponent has committed in the PNF to construct the building with a continuous perimeter wall footing bearing in the relatively impervious clay surface, creating an "essentially impervious" barrier to prevent the flow of groundwater from entering the area below the lowest floor slab from the adjacent layer. The proponent has further committed that the perimeter garage wall will be waterproofed. While there will be an underdrain system below the slab, the proponent has committed that any water collected will be discharged into the recharge system. He has further committed to install a water meter on the pump from the

underdrain system; the flow data should be shared with BWSC and the Trust. The proponent believes that these steps, when fully designed and implemented, should help to meet the GCOD standard.

The excavation for the garage will extend substantially below the upper trapped aquifer that is critical to maintaining integrity of wood pilings. It is critical that no path be created that will allow the water in this layer to drain down to the sand layer below. Along with confirmation of the details above, the stamped certification letter from a registered professional engineer shall show how the creation of such a pathway will be prevented.

The Trust currently has two groundwater observation wells along the perimeter of the site, one each on Boylston and Kilmarnock Streets. Care should be taken during construction to preserve these resources. If it is necessary to destroy a well, it must be replaced. In addition, it would be useful to have an additional observation well installed along Van Ness Street. It is important to monitor groundwater levels before, during, and after construction; it is critical to establish emergency stop-work procedures should groundwater levels drop during excavation.

I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to assure that the project can have only positive impacts on groundwater levels in the Fenway neighborhood.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer  
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA  
Maura Zlody, BED