

Boston Groundwater Trust

229 Berkeley St, Fourth Floor, Boston, MA 02116
617.859.8439 voice
www.bostongroundwater.org

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June 25th, 2015

Katelyn Sullivan, Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Fisher College Institutional Master Plan

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the institutional master plan (IMP) for Fisher College. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of Boston where the integrity of building foundations is threatened by low groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. Therefore my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

As stated in the IMP, Fisher College is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District (GCOD) established in Article 32 of the Boston Zoning Code. Many of the College's properties are located on the north side of Beacon Street between Arlington and Berkeley Streets. This is a sensitive area in which there have been historic problems with low groundwater levels as far back as 1911 when piling repairs were needed to repair the structure at 118 Beacon Street. In 2009, the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission made major efforts to recharge water in the area, leading to substantial increases in groundwater levels. It is essential that nothing be done to threaten those gains.

As stated in the IMP the proponent has committed to meeting the recharge requirements of the GCOD and to receiving a written determination from BWSC that the standard is met. That would satisfy one of the GCOD criteria. The other is to provide a certification, stamped by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts, demonstrating that the project will have no negative impact on groundwater levels on site or on adjoining lots. Because this is planned as an IMP and because the project is small enough that it will not trigger Article 80 review, there will be no further zoning review by the Board of Appeals prior to construction. Therefore, for both reasons, it is critical that the potential impact of this project be resolved before zoning review and approval is complete.

I look forward to continuing to work with the proponent and the Authority to assure that this project can have only positive impacts on area groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,



Christian Simonelli
Executive Director

CC: Kathleen Pederson, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED