

Boston Groundwater Trust

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April 21st, 2016

Casey Hines, Senior Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Harrison Albany Block Expanded Project Notification Form

Dear Ms. Hines:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the expanded project notification form (EPNF) for Harrison Albany Block. 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.

The project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District (GCOD) established under Article 32 of the Zoning Code. As stated in the EPNF and confirmed at the scoping session the project is proposed to be designed and constructed to comply with the requirements of Article 32. The site is in an area with many wood piling supported buildings on East Dedham, East Canton, and East Brookline Streets.

As stated in the EPNF and confirmed at the scoping session compliance with the GCOD requires both the installation of a recharge system and a demonstration that the project cannot cause a reduction in groundwater levels on site or on adjoining lots. Also stated in the EPNF, a three level below-grade parking structure beneath the new buildings identified in the document as Building A and Building B is planned. The EPNF states that construction of the foundations and the below-grade parking structure will require excavation depths anticipated to be up to 40 feet below ground surface terminating to an approximate EL. of -22 BCB.

As stated in the EPNF and confirmed at the scoping session, the excavation will be conducted in an as yet to be determined engineered lateral earth support system, such as a slurry wall or steel sheetpile wall system. The system will be designed to provide excavation support and maintain groundwater levels outside the excavation by creating a groundwater "cutoff" between the excavation and the surrounding area. In addition the EPNF states that the lateral earth support system will be designed to be installed/sealed into the clay stratum to isolate the excavation and future below-grade garage from the groundwater table.

Before the GCOD zoning approval can be put in place, the proponent must provide the BRA and the Trust a letter stamped by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts that details how it will accomplish what is stated in the EPNF and meets the GCOD requirement for no reduction in groundwater levels on site or on adjoining lots.

The EPNF states that temporary dewatering will be required inside the excavation during excavation and foundation construction to remove “free” water from the soils to be excavated as well as precipitation. The proponent confirmed at the scoping session that the dewatering effluent is scheduled to be deposited onsite into a recharge pit.

The proponent confirmed at the scoping session monitoring data for existing and new groundwater observation wells will be collected pre, during, and post construction and the data will be furnished to the Trust and the Authority on a weekly basis. In the event that groundwater levels drop below the observed pre-construction baseline levels during construction, provisions must be in place to halt construction and dewatering until the cause is found and remedied. I look forward to working with the proponents Engineer on reviewing the monitoring wells in the area to be read and reported. Reporting of the groundwater level data and provisions to halt construction and dewatering if groundwater levels outside the project site drop below baseline levels should mirror the plan developed by the projects Engineer for the 888 Boylston Street project.

At the scoping session the proponent stated that they would investigate installing one additional monitoring well on East Dedham Street where there are currently no observation wells. This observation well should be installed prior to construction activities and be included in the group of wells to be monitored pre, during, and post construction.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christian S. Simonelli".

Christian Simonelli
Executive Director

CC: Kathleen Pederson, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED