

Boston Groundwater Trust

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Elliott Laffer

October 19, 2010

Mr. Tai Lim
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: The Kensington

Dear Mr. Lim:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Project Change for the Kensington 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 limited to groundwater related issues.

The project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overly District, which was established after Planned Development Area for The Kensington was approved in 2003. The project changes will require modification to that zoning approval. While groundwater is not discussed in the NPC, I am pleased that the proponent, during the scoping session, agreed that the GCOD requirements will apply to the revised project and that they will comply with them.

The reduction from five levels of below grade parking to two reduces the likelihood that the project will cause a reduction in area groundwater levels. The project will still have to submit a professional engineer (who has not yet done the design work) stamped certification that the project will be designed and constructed to assure that such a reduction will not take place and describing the steps to be taken to support that assurance. Of particular concern are provisions to prevent groundwater from entering the building and prevention of any possible groundwater level reduction caused by building underdrains, ideally by eliminating them from the design.

In addition, the project will have to meet the recharge requirement spelled out in Article 32. I am pleased that the proponent agreed in the scoping session that these steps will be taken. The certification letter is to be provided to both the Authority and the Trust; the recharge will need to be approved by the Boston Water and Sewer Commission. All of this must be complete before the issuance of a building permit.

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

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED