

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 25, 2013

- 1. City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group met yesterday. This remains a critically important and very effective entity. Details of the reports from individual entities are included below.
- 2. MBTA** – The T has completed design work and subcontractor selection for the installation of the recharge system additions to raise groundwater levels in the section of the South End near Back Bay Station. They are in the final stages of permitting and still plan to have the system installed and operational this Fall.
- 3. BWSC** – BWSC has completed the scheduled repairs on Blagden Street, but groundwater levels have risen only in a small section of the street and have shown some drop back in recent monitoring; they will be conducting additional inspection of the repair and other sections of the nearby pipe. In the North End, they continue to do dye testing near the intersection of Commercial and Richmond Streets to attempt to identify the cause of low groundwater there; nearby levels to the south along Commercial Street have dropped significantly recently and the area will be further studied. They have received a plan from the Benjamin Franklin Institute in the South End for changes the school will make to eliminate groundwater infiltration and pumping; this should help to alleviate a significant low groundwater spot near Berkeley and Tremont Streets.
- 4. MassDOT** – MassDOT sealed nine additional leaks in the drain line from the Turnpike. They are now focusing on the area between Berkeley and Clarendon Streets, will then move further to the west, although repairs there are complicated by the smaller diameter of the pipe in that area.
- 5. GCOD** – Compliance with GCOD continues to be excellent, thanks to the efforts of ISD, BWSC, the BRA, and the Board of Appeals. Over 200 recharge systems have now been installed under the GCOD. We are working with ISD to try to streamline the system, without changing the zoning, for projects that need zoning approval only for GCOD and with no below grade construction or building extension.
- 6. Porous Alley** – Plans are moving ahead for installation of a porous surface in Public Alley 543 in the South End. We have installed two new observation wells in the alley just beyond either end of what will be the porous area and begun data logging in these and four other nearby existing wells. This will give us an excellent basis on which to understand the impact of the porous surface on groundwater levels compared to the existing impervious surface, both adjacent to the surface and in areas as much as a block away. The project, scheduled for installation next Spring, is funded by a grant from DEP with matching contributions from the City, the Charles River Watershed Association, and the Trust.
- 7. ABX Conference** – Along with Boston Architectural College, Judith Nitsch Associates, and Halvorsen Design Partnership, we will be participating in a panel discussion at the ABX Conference on November 19 at 10:00 AM to discuss efforts around groundwater with a focus on the Green Alley project installed between the college's buildings on Newbury and Boylston Streets.
- 8. BSCES Geo Institute Technical Group** – I will be speaking about our efforts to raise groundwater levels to their seminar on Designing Infrastructure for the Future Geotechnical Challenge on November 9 at MIT.

- 9. Website** – We have had very positive feedback on our revised website, and traffic remains substantial.
- 10. Meetings** – I was a participant at the second public meeting on the Porous Alley project. Christian and I met with the proponents of a new project near the Cathedral in the South End. We met with the data management contractor for the Boston Architectural College’s Green Alley project to review information he has gathered and suggest other ways to format the data. I attended the BAC’s symposium on the Green Alley and took an active part in the question and answer session; I also attended the ribbon cutting ceremony. Christian and I attended the City’s Complete Streets presentation at the BSA. I attended scoping sessions on the Landmark Center and Hotel Commonwealth projects.
- 11. Comment Letters** – I filed comments on the Landmark Center addition project. As always, all comments are posted at www.bostongroundwater.org.