

March 29, 2007

Mr. Mark McGowan, Economic Development
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Waterside Place

Dear Mr. McGowan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DPIR for Waterside Place. 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 lowered groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. As such, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

The Boston redevelopment Authority has recently recommended, and the Boston Zoning Commission is now considering, an extension of the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District to the Fort Point Channel section of South Boston. Although the Waterside Place project is several blocks away from the proposed boundaries of the zone, it will be constructed in made land; a groundwater drawdown there could potentially affect the levels in the Fort Point area where virtually all of the buildings are wood piling supported.

While most of the project related parking will be above grade, there will be a deep garage along Congress Street for which the excavation will extend to about Elevation -21' BCB, well below the level at which pilings are cut off in the Fort Point area. It is critical that the sections of the structure below anticipated groundwater levels be designed to not leak not only during construction but during operation of the facility. If underdrains are to be used, as anticipated in the DPIR, the system must be designed so that they cannot remove groundwater from levels above the organic silt.

I am pleased that the proponent plans to install four groundwater observation wells and to monitor levels before, during, and after construction. As with other major projects, those levels should be shared with the Trust shortly after they are measured. I further appreciate the

proponent's plans to turn the wells over to the Trust after completion of construction so that we can incorporate them into our monitoring network.

As this exciting new area of the City is built out, it is vital that we protect the historic areas that so shape Boston's character. I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority to make sure that we do so.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pederson, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED