

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 11, 2005

- 1. September 15** – This was a banner day for the groundwater issue. The Trust was one of the signatories to a landmark Memorandum of Understanding committing the major City and Commonwealth agencies with potential impact on groundwater to work together toward solutions to the problem. The Mayor signed an ordinance passes unanimously by the Council the day before amending our Declaration of Trust to extend our working area to all parts of the City where the groundwater problem exists (this and previously adopted changes to the Declaration have been filed with the City Clerk and Attorney General and are now in force). The BRA announced its intention to file for a Groundwater Conservation Overlay District to increase recharge and require that new construction in the district not cause a reduction in groundwater levels. The US EPA announced a new \$192,000 grant to the City to continue efforts at combating the groundwater problem. As a result of the changes to the Declaration of Trust, the Mayor has now appointed two new constituent trustees and three new ex-officio trustees.
- 2. City/State Groundwater Working Group** – The Memorandum of Understanding formally established the City/State Groundwater Working Group which will meet at least quarterly to share information and coordinate efforts on the groundwater problem. The group, chaired by Jim Hunt and Andrew Gottlieb, will have its first formal meeting on Oct. 28. It succeeds the informal group that has met twice under their chairmanship. Already, there is a significant increase in information sharing among the agencies.
- 3. Zoning** – The BRA will hold a public meeting on the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District on Oct. 27 at 5:30 at the Rabb Lecture Hall at the Boston Public Library. The zoning will make construction below elevation 7' BCB or any construction that adds 50 square feet to the ground coverage of a building conditional, requiring notification of abutters and a hearing in front of the Board of Appeals. It will also require new paving to be pervious or to include a recharge system.
- 4. DCR** – The DCR has provided the Working Group with data on groundwater pumping at the Storrow Drive underpass. They have also laid out a schedule for reconstruction of the underpass that will include a public meeting, probably in November, to describe a conceptual design for the construction and necessary traffic diversion. If that meets with general acceptance, they anticipate a roughly one year design phase, with construction starting in Spring 2007 and completion three years later. Funding for design is in place. While construction funds are not yet set, Andrew Gottlieb anticipated that they would be available on the schedule outlined.
- 5. MBTA** – The T has shared with the Trust as custodian for the working group data for its four pumping stations. We are working to analyze and understand the data and its implications for groundwater levels.

6. **MTA** – The Turnpike Authority responded to concerns that I mentioned in an earlier informal working group meeting by asking to visit the site in East Boston where we believed there was a problem. Christian and I visited along with Rick McCollough of the MTA. The house, the backyard of which overlooks the entrance to the Sumner Tunnel, has a test pit that shows severely deteriorated pilings. The MTA is gathering information to better assess what might be happening there.
7. **BRA** – In addition to several discussions about the language in the zoning amendment, I have met with the BRA to discuss standard language that can be used in cooperation agreements to assure that groundwater related commitments are met.
8. **St. Charles St** – Wentworth Institute hosted a meeting at which the students who had developed a potential solution to the St. Charles St problem, as suggested by Jim Lambrechts, presented it to interested public officials. There was substantial interest in the approach and indications that it, or an alternate approach, will be taken further.
9. **Legislative Meetings** – Christian and I hosted Byron Rushing to demonstrate to him how we read wells. I have also had meetings with Aaron Michlewitz, an aide to Speaker DiMasi, to go over the Wentworth presentation and the zoning amendment.
10. **City Council Hearing** – There was a City Council hearing on groundwater issues held on September 6 at the BPL. Over 250 people attended on the day after Labor Day, another sign of the high current interest in the issue. All of the At Large Councilors attended, as did Councilors Kelly (who chaired) and Ross. I was asked to be the first speaker after the elected officials.
11. **Meeting with City Councilors** – Along with two leaders from Citywide GET, I met with Councilors Kelly, Ross, Murphy, and Arroyo, and an aide to Councilor Flaherty to discuss groundwater issues. Much of the meeting was spent on the zoning amendment. The Councilors also committed to a periodic review of the City's progress on groundwater issues.
12. **Website** – Our improved interactive map is now live on the website. As of this week, Christian will be able to update well readings directly. Well readings now appear on the map, and it is possible to look at the readings from the map in a much more coherent way. Traffic to the site was heavy in September. October has been light so far, but will likely pick up as the new readings are posted this week.
13. **Strategic Planning** – Ann Donner has completed her interviews and we have talked about her findings and an agenda for the planning session next Thursday. She and I will be meeting Friday to finalize plans.
14. **EPA Grant** – Jim Hunt has asked me to put together proposals for utilizing the new EPA grant. I have received a comprehensive proposal from Wentworth for four potential research projects and expect another from Northeastern. I will finalize my report to Jim after the strategic planning session.
15. **Construction Incident** – On September 26, our drill rig punctured a BWSC water line at the corner of Washington and West Dedham Streets. The location had been marked by BWSC as part of Dig Safe procedures, and the vacuum truck

- had previously checked the location. The line was not BWSC's map. Fortunately, there were no injuries and no serious property damage. BWSC is taking care of the cost of repairs. After receiving Christian's call, I went to the site and wound up talking to reporters from all of the local television stations. We have received no negative feedback from the incident.
- 16. UMass Boston** – I was visited by a student at UMass. She is working on water issues on campus. They may be setting up a forum at which I could explain what the groundwater problem is to students at the university and possibly several other local campuses.
 - 17. Press** – There were articles, all posted on the website, in the Boston Globe, Boston Courant, and Beacon Hill Times, all focused on the announcements of Sept. 15. In addition, I had an interview with the managing editor of NE Condo magazine, who is doing a groundwater story that should be appearing soon.
 - 18. Comment Letter** – I filed comments on the FEIR for the Clarendon, posted on our website.
 - 19. 501(c)3** – We have responded to what should be the final question of the IRS. We hope to have an approval letter soon.
 - 20. Annual Report** – Raphael and Raphael is completing our financial review and tax return. We should be issuing our annual report this month.
 - 21. Funding** – We have received the \$50,000 for additional capital projects from Environmental Bond Bill funds committed at the end of the fiscal year. The funds were used for the website update, level logging equipment, and replacement roadway box covers. As part of its mitigation commitments, The Clarendon project has committed \$75,000 for funding for the Trust.
 - 22. Level Logging Equipment** – We returned the originally ordered equipment that didn't fit into our wells. We have now received new smaller equipment. The first wells to receive the equipment should be fitted with it this week. We have (25) of the MiniTROLL units.
 - 23. Health and Safety Policy** – We have almost completed the policy statement. I expect to have it for approval at the next meeting.