

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 27, 2006

1. **City/State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group met on April 13. The attendance remains excellent, with all parties engaged in open and serious discussion of the issues. Specific agency reports are included below.
2. **Andrew Gottlieb** – The Governor has appointed Andrew Gottlieb as the new Secretary of Commonwealth Development, replacing Doug Foy. Andrew cochairs the City-State Groundwater Working Group with Jim Hunt and has been instrumental in getting the state agencies to focus on groundwater issues. This appointment will assure that groundwater issues continue to get high level focus from the Romney Administration.
3. **Funding** – The BWSC Board has approved a \$25,000 contribution to BGwT for 2006. We should receive the check within a week. The City Council has received the Mayor's budget that includes full funding for our request for FY2007; as of now, it does not look like any of the Environment Dept requests will be subject to a hearing, and there should be no problem with the request at the Council.
4. **Zoning** – I will be meeting with Jim Hunt, Nancy Grilk, ISD, and ZBA next week to discuss how we can best expedite those projects that require no other zoning relief besides the conditional use permit under GCOD so that they don't have to face the regular wait for a ZBA hearing, now 4-6 months. Jim Hunt and I presented information about GCOD and the decision process on its potential extension to the study areas at a meeting in East Boston on April 10; we will be doing the same in the North End on May 4.
5. **BWSC** – Final repairs to the new sewer and recharge installation in the alley behind Hemenway Street were completed in early April and should show results in our next readings. The Back Street project, which will include relining some sections and rebuilding others, with a recharge system for the rebuilt sections, should be advertised for construction later this spring. The West Side Interceptor will be relined between the Dartmouth/Beacon and Charles/Revere intersections from June through August; the contract has been awarded. They have discovered additional leaks in the St. James Avenue sewer beyond the end of the recent work and will be repairing these as well, including a significant leak in a cross connection near Clarendon Street. They expected to get authorization at last week's board meeting for a contract to inspect all sewers in areas where groundwater is below 5 feet, generally a television inspection except for a walkthrough in a few larger sewers.
6. **DCR** – DCR has filed the Environmental Notification Form for the Storrow Drive underpass project. They have committed to the installation of a system to recharge any water that would be drained from a tunnel structure or any drains under it to the land side of the seawall. One study alternative is a surface road, in which case there would be neither drains nor recharge system. DCR also held a public meeting on the underpass on March 27 at which they discussed the various alternatives they have been looking at and again stated their commitment that the new construction would be designed so that it could not worsen the groundwater situation. Comment on the ENF is due in June.

7. **MBTA** – The T offered a detailed plan for a process to design the system to attempt to raise groundwater levels in the St. Charles St area. They have engaged Steve Poulos as their engineer to consult on the system; he has been tasked with offering ideas to a technical subcommittee of the Working Group by its next meeting in July. Mr. Poulos has begun his investigations and will be installing an additional monitoring well and doing geotechnical studies on Chandler Street near the MBTA structure to help in his studies. We will get the use of the new well after the T has completed using it. The T Board has approved the Capital Improvement Plan that includes \$2.97 million for groundwater related work; the bulk of this money is scheduled to be spent in FY08, but they are trying to expedite some of the funds to allow work to proceed more quickly.
8. **MTA** – The MTA found a small leak (about 1 gallon/minute) in a Callahan Tunnel abutment near North Street; it should be repaired within 4-6 weeks. There were no leaks around Sumner Tunnel connections in the North End. They expect to take bids for repair of the leak in the drain near Herald Street within four weeks.
9. **Chandler Street** – A substantial reduction in well readings in the Chandler/Tremont Street area was revealed by our data loggers in February. Both MTA and MBTA have done some investigation and have not found a cause. Investigation will continue.
10. **East Boston** – MWRA investigated their pipes near the low point on Porter Street. Their large pipe was recently relined and found to be tight. They have an 18 inch clay pipe that shows some cracks near the crown; they have not yet been able to determine the condition near the bottom. The elevations of their pipes line up pretty closely with the groundwater levels that we have measured, so they will continue their investigation.
11. **St. Charles St** – It is unclear whether the money in the MBTA budget will be in addition to that planned for the supplemental budget. The budget remains on hold behind other legislative business.
12. **Well Installation** – We are beginning the installation process for the remaining 137 wells this week. Christian, Jim Lambrechts and I met with Jim Hunt and Nancy Grilks to discuss changes we should make in the original layout to accommodate the need for data to help in decisions on extending the GCOD. Nancy then coordinated a meeting for Christian and me with BTM and MTA to discuss some locations where we asked to hold off on installations last year. Modifications to the planned installations were made after those meetings. We will complete our work in the North End/Waterfront area first, then proceed back to East Boston, and finally wrap up with fill in locations in Back Bay, Fenway, and finally the South End.
13. **City Council Hearing** – The City Council has scheduled a hearing on groundwater issues for 6:00 PM on May 18 at the Council Chambers. This is a follow up to last fall's hearing at the BPL and responds to the request from Citywide GET that the Council hold hearings every six months to keep track of the efforts around the groundwater issue.
14. **Website** – Traffic on the website in April has continued at a high level, with visits trailing only March. We will be posting the results of our data logger readings shortly. They will be separate from the regular map readings.

- 15. EPA Grant** – Nancy Grilk is finalizing the details of the grant application, which should be completed shortly. I've been working with her. It is still the City's intention that the Trust will implement projects funded by the grant.
- 16. Press** – There were no new press articles this month.
- 17. Comment Letters** – I filed comments on projects at 79 Chandler Street and 285 Columbus Avenue. They are posted on the website. I expect to file comments shortly on the South Station Air Rights project, as well as additional comments on Lovejoy Wharf and new comments on a project at 316-322 Summer Street.
- 18. 501(c)3** – We are still waiting for approval from the IRS on our filing. There has been no comment since we filed our return.
- 19. Funding** – The BWSC Board voted last week to approve a \$25,000 donation to the Trust. We should receive the check within a week. Funding from the Columbus Center and Clarendon projects will pass through the BRA after the projects get their building permits.