

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 15, 2014

1. **City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group met on April 29. Reports from individual agencies are described below.
2. **MBTA** – Groundwater levels in the section of the South End near Back Bay Station where the T has installed additional continuous recharge systems have continued to rise slowly, although they have not yet reached the levels projected by the system designers. The T continues to monitor and adjust the system as they deem necessary. They are hopeful that the planned changes at the Benjamin Franklin Institute (see BWSC below) will allow levels to rise where they are still somewhat below the projected and adequate levels.
3. **BWSC** – BWSC continues to investigate the cause of low groundwater levels near the corner of Commercial and Richmond Streets in the North End, with more dye testing scheduled for May; inspection of the large sewer pipe by a diver did not reveal any problems. They continue to press the Benjamin Franklin Institute, which is under orders to comply and behind schedule, to complete their planned repairs so that the Institute will no longer be pumping groundwater. On Blagdon Street, inspections so far do not reveal a likely BWSC related problem; they will look farther if the MassDOT repairs (see below) do not lead to increased water levels on Blagdon Street.
4. **MassDOT** – MassDOT inspected the rest of the drain line from the MassPike Prudential tunnel and discovered several leaks near Exit 20, very close to a long standing low groundwater zone at the corner of Exeter Street and Huntington Avenue. Levels are now at the lowest that we have ever measured; our Technical Advisory Committee members have speculated that this may be because the cleaning of the line opened the leak wider. Repairs should take place in the next 1-2 weeks.
5. **GCOD** – Compliance with GCOD continues to be excellent, thanks to the efforts of ISD, BWSC, the BRA, and the Board of Appeals. Over 220 recharge systems have now been installed under the GCOD. The Board of Appeals has put in place a streamlined system that sets up a special portion of Board hearings for those projects that require only a conditional use permit for GCOD; this will take them out of the regular queue, reduce wait time for a hearing on these cases, and also allow the Board to slot additional cases in its regular agenda. The system has begun to get GCOD only cases in front of the Board more quickly.
6. **Porous Alley** – Bids have been received on the porous alley project and were within projected budget costs. The contract should be awarded soon, with construction likely in June.
7. **Website** – We continue to have very positive feedback on our revised website, and traffic remains substantial.
8. **Meetings** – I participated in an Urban Land Institute sponsored charrette on the effect of rising sea levels, forming part of a team that looked at potential issues in the Back Bay. Christian and I met with the developer of condominium units at 380 Commonwealth Avenue (now part of the Harvard Club) to discuss the planned recharge system.