

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

July 17, 2014

1. **City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group will meet again on July 24.
2. **MBTA** – The T has completed their system to raise groundwater levels in the section of the South End south of Back Bay Station. Levels have stabilized and are generally in the acceptable range except in the area near the Benjamin Franklin Institute. The school this month put into service a system to recharge groundwater that it has been pumping into the BWSC sewer system. We have seen some subsequent increase in levels in data loggers near the school and are eager to see where they will stabilize.
3. **BWSC** – BWSC continues to investigate the cause of low groundwater levels near the corner of Commercial and Richmond Streets in the North End; inspection of the large sewer pipe by a diver did not reveal any problems. They have plans for future lining of pipes in the area to maintain their system in good repair that may overcome the problem if a source is not found before the work is scheduled. 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. They have completed repairs. They found a leak in a pipe belonging to the Copley Place structure, for which MassDOT is the landlord; subsequent inspection showed no leakage.
5. **Exeter St/Huntington Ave Area** – This has been a long-time hard to explain low groundwater level area. When MassDOT found leakage nearby in the Turnpike drain line, we were hopeful that would lead to higher levels. Levels dropped further a few months ago, but that coincided with the beginning of dewatering for underpinning at a nearby property that we and our Technical Advisory Committee thought was the likely cause of the drawdown. However, levels have continued to drop to the lowest that we have ever measured (some of the wells have been read since 1999), and the engineer for the repair project has advised us that they are no longer dewatering near Huntington Ave, have recharged all of the water from the dewatering on site, and are also mystified and concerned about the low levels. This will be a topic of discussion at the City-State Groundwater Working Group meeting next week.
6. **GCOD** – Concerns have been raised by developers, contractors, and others about the amount of time that GCOD-compliant plans have taken to get final approvals through the zoning process. While the special session for GCOD only requests that has been instituted by the Board of Appeals has reduced the wait for these projects by as much as two months, there are still complaints about the time to get through the system. I have met separately with new ISD Commissioner William Christopher and with Brian Swett and will be meeting with Councilors Yu and Zakim later this month to discuss ways to streamline the system without removing the protections inherent in the GCOD zoning.
7. **Porous Alley** – Construction on the Porous Alley project in the South End began this week. If there are no unanticipated delays, it should take about three weeks to complete. We have data loggers in six wells around the project, including two wells

installed in the alley as part of the process, and will have nearly a year of data on the response of groundwater levels to precipitation with the conventional pavement and will be analyzing comparable data post construction to see how the response changes.

- 8. Meetings** – In addition to the meetings on GCOD mentioned above, Christian and I participated in the public meeting about the Porous Alley project that was held to keep neighbors up-to-date.