

BOSTON GROUNDWATER TRUST (BGwT)
BOARD MEETING
January 31, 2008
The Lenox Hotel – Patriot Room

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Boston Groundwater Trust was called order at 4:09 pm in the Patriot meeting room. The meeting notice was posted at City Hall in accordance with provision of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law.

Trustees in attendance, comprising a quorum, were:

Mr. Tim Mitchell, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay
Mr. Gary Saunders, Boston Back Bay Association
Mr. Galen Gilbert, Fenway Community Development Corporation (CDC)
Mr. Peter Sherin, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Michael Nairne, Ellis Neighborhood Association
Mr. William Moy, Chinatown Neighborhood Council
Mr. Jim Hunt, City of Boston
Ms. Nancy Grilk, Mayor's office

Also present were:

Elliott Laffer, BGwT Executive Director; Christian Simonelli, BGwT Technical Coordinator; Anne M. Pistorio, North End Water Front Residents Association (NEWRA) Groundwater Working Group

1. Adoption of the minutes of the November 29, 2007 Meeting

Minutes were distributed to board members for review.

Trustee Moy moved to adopt the minutes. Trustee Mitchell seconded the motion.

Voted: To accept the minutes of the November 29, 2007 meeting.

2. Finance Report

Trustee Sherin reviewed the BGwT *Financial Report and Reconciliation Detail*. He said that we were lucky to have fixed rate of interest at 5.5% on our savings, while interest rates in everything around us were far below that level. This rate will last until August, 2008.

He noted that the reports reflect 2 months of financial activity. Discussion followed.

3. FY 2008 IRA-SEP Contribution Level

Mr. Laffer reviewed the BGWT's plan for a contribution to the Trust employees' IRA-SEP. He noted that funding for a 3% contribution was included in the FY08 budget adopted by the trustees. Discussion followed.

Trustee's Saunders and Mitchell recommended that the board approve a 3% contribution to the Trust employees' IRA-SEP.

Trustee Nairne moved to adopt the recommendation. Trustee Sherin seconded the motion.

Voted: To approve a 3% contribution to the Trust employees' IRA-SEP.

4. Research Projects

Mr. Laffer updated the BGWT on finding the tops of woodpiles using radar and acoustics. He noted that not much progress has been made on this front but, that Northeastern is still trying. Discussion followed.

Trustee Gilbert suggested that Mr. Laffer review the methods in which Northeastern is using in detecting the woodpiles. Trustees Gilbert and Saunders noted that they have each read about other methods that have been used in detecting objects underground. Discussion followed.

Mr. Laffer reviewed Professor Lambrechts proposed Mat-Slab foundation. Mr. Laffer noted that in discussions with the contractor and the city it was not to go ahead with installation at the originally planned location because the designated buyer of the building plans to raze it. The City continues to look for a possible alternate location. The project was designed and bid for the original location, yielding much valuable information which will be included in a report to the Trust from Wentworth Institute of Technology. Discussion followed.

5. MBTA Back Bay Station Area Project Update

Mr. Laffer updated the BGWT on the MBTA workshop that took place on January 31. He noted that the presentation of the long-term plan for the Ellis Neighborhood foundation by the MBTA was met well by the public. Discussion followed.

Mr. Laffer noted that he had met with the MBTA at their request to discuss the possibility of the BGWT holding the \$2,000,000 designated for the project by the Commonwealth as a kind of endowment to fund maintenance of the recharge system. There was no support in the Trust for the Trust to administer any part of the system maintenance. Trustee Gilbert expressed the opinion that if it was safe for the Trust to act as a banker only for this money, then the City Trust Department would be a better trustee.

Trustee Nairne reported that a building on Casanova Street had been condemned by ISD because of rotting piles in the foundation and that the owner was disputing this condemnation with her own engineering report about the soundness of her piles. Trustee Hunt thought it was unwise to link the issue of compensation for this property owner to the MBTA proposal, which could save many other houses if not hers.

The Trust decided to devote discussions at other meeting on specific neighborhoods, one each meeting with the Executive Director to provide resources and information as needed. Trustee Hunt suggested that East Boston be first, because of the novelty of technical issues there, and the research project that is ongoing. The Co-Chairs are to select the neighborhoods for each future meeting.

6. City-State Working Group

Mr. Laffer updated the BGwT on the January 24 Group's meeting. Refer to the attached *Executive Director's Report: January 31, 2008* for a complete list of all topics covered at the meeting. Discussion followed.

Mr. Laffer noted that the DCR will be bidding an interim recharge system along Storrow drive as an add-alternative to the interim repairs to be bid in February. The budget includes the recharge system which will be installed unless bids significantly exceed the budget. Trustee Hunt noted that the water from the west pumping station will be pumped into the Back Street recharge galleries previously installed by BWSC. Discussion followed.

Mr. Laffer also noted that BWSC has injected about 500,000 gallons of water with green dye through the temporary injection well installed by BGwT in the BRA parking lot on Fulton Street. This has been an effort to discover the reason for very low groundwater levels in the area of Fulton and Cross Streets very close to where there are several observation wells indicating much higher levels. The dye has not yet appeared at any of the locations at which BWSC, MTA, and BGwT have looked for it. Flow into the well has now been suspended because of cold weather, but will resume when the weather warms up; BWSC plans to inject another 1.5 million gallons. The water injected so far has not had any detectable impact on groundwater levels at the nearby observation wells, all of which are being monitored with data loggers.

7. Website Improvement

Mr. Elliott Laffer noted that a new GCOD section has been added to the opening page of the website. The section is a "how to" on the process from the regulatory sections and information on filing. Trustee Mitchell expressed his pleasure with the addition of the new section. Discussion followed. Mr. Laffer also noted that the BGwT plans to upgrade the interactive map so that locations can be searched by entering an address rather than zooming in to a location. All other functions will remain as is. The cost is within the website budget, and the project will proceed so that it should be in place within two months.

8. Executive Director's Report

BGwT Executive Director Mr. Elliott Laffer distributed his report. Discussion followed. Refer to the attached *Executive Director's Report: January 31, 2008*, for a complete list of all activities.

9. Technical Coordinator's Report

BGwT Technical Coordinator Mr. Christian Simonelli presented his activities of the past month. Discussion followed. Refer to the attached *Technical Coordinator's Well Monitoring Update BGwT Meeting: January 31, 2008* for a complete list of all activities.

10. Other Business

Mr. Mitchell noted that the Beacon Hill Civic Association (BHCA) identified a new trustee for the BGwT. Trustee Grilk has requested a Resume and a letter from the BHCA requesting her appointment. Discussion followed.

Trustee Gilbert suggested the BGwT look into establishing a groundwater convention to help expand the BGwT's knowledge and invite others to comment on the issue. Discussion followed. Mr. Laffer will look into what it will take to establish a convention.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Galen Gilbert".

Galen Gilbert, Secretary

NEXT MEETING: March 27, 2008 @ 4:00 pm at the Lenox Hotel.

Notes submitted by Christian Simonelli, BGwT Technical Coordinator, on 2/1/08.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
January 31, 2008

1. **City-State Groundwater Working Group** – The Working Group met on January 24. The level of cooperation and information interchange remains high. Individual reports are summarized under the agencies below.
2. **DCR** – The DCR is currently performing emergency repairs on the Storrow Drive Tunnel. They will be bidding the interim repair work on the tunnel in February. An interim recharge system that would bring all of the water removed at the west pumping station to the recharge galleys installed by BWSC in Back Street will be bid as an add/alternative. DCR has committed to include the recharge system unless bids are significantly over budget. The interim project is scheduled for installation between April and September. Long term repair/replacement of the tunnel awaits the DCR study of sequencing of repairs on all of the Charles River Basin roads and river crossings, to be conducted starting this spring.
3. **MBTA** – The T held a public meeting on January 30 to discuss the long term solution recommended for the section of the South End near Back Bay Station. This will include a recharge system using water presently pumped away from the Follen Street pumping station with full design of an underground barrier along Berkeley and Chandler Streets. The underground barrier will be bid as an add/alternate and will be installed if further study shows that it is necessary. Funding for the project comes from the MBTA capital budget as well as an appropriation from the Commonwealth sponsored by Speaker Sal DiMasi. The T also met with me to bring me up to date on Silver Line Phase III. They have installed five new observation wells near the projected portal route in Bay Village; we will begin reading them in our current round of observations. The SFEIR for the project will be filed late this summer with comments due in the fall. At the most optimistic, construction on the project, expected to take six years, would begin in 2010.
4. **BWSC** – They have video inspected 55,000' of low lying sewers. While 15,000' will need repair or replacement, none showed any obvious current leaks. They would like to video another 5000', but have to work out some access and technical issues.
5. **GCOD** – Compliance with GCOD requirements continues to be excellent. Only two variances have been requested, both clearly justified by site conditions and reviewed by BWSC, the BRA, ISD, and the Trust before approval by the Board of Appeals. We have prepared a guide to the process that is now up on our website.
6. **North End** – BWSC injected over 500,000 gallons of water with green dye at the injection well that we installed in the North End. So far none has been seen. They plan to resume the process when the weather warms up. BWSC, the MTA, and the Trust are looking for dye at locations where it is thought likely to show up.
7. **MWRA** – The MWRA will perform additional video inspection of their sewer lines at three locations in East Boston where readings remain low: Bremen and Porter Streets; Porter and London Streets; and Maverick and Frankfort Streets. They will repair any leaks that show up. Work is scheduled to get under way this summer on their court ordered reconstruction of their sewer system in much of East Boston.
8. **Legislation** – Citywide GET has developed a later draft of their legislation since meeting with the Trust in November. Rep. Walz has asked me to advise her in considering it.
9. **Website** – Traffic to the website dropped in December, as it often does. It has picked up since the middle of January. In addition to the section on GCOD procedures, we are

looking into upgrading the interactive map so that inquiries can be made by address instead of zooming in on a location.

- 10. Research Projects** – The City has decided not to fund the installation project in East Boston because of the need to remove the new foundation so that work can proceed on a new building on the site. However, the project has let us work through many of the design issues and get a legitimate bid for the work that was far lower than the cost of underpinning. The City continues to look for an alternate site. The project to develop a method to remotely sense pile cutoff elevations remains a difficult technical challenge. The researchers at Northeastern have been able to determine a cutoff, but at a distance that is far to close to be practical. They continue to work at whether they can find a practical solution.
- 11. 350 Boylston Street** – I have been appointed to the Impact Advisory Group for this project at the corner with Arlington Street. The site is one where groundwater levels have been a concern. The IAG comments will include an emphasis on groundwater among other issues. I have also filed comments on the project and met with the developer and his engineers to discuss their plans for a recharge system that will be used for both construction dewatering and reinjection from underdrains in addition to handling recharge from roof drains.
- 12. Comment Letters** – I have just filed comments on a project at 30 North Margin Street in the North End that includes a four level underground garage. I anticipate filing comments next month on the Turnpike Air Rights Parcel 7 project near Kenmore Square. This project also includes an underground garage on the terra firma portion of the site that is relatively close to an area where we understand there are wood piling supported structures. As always, all comment letters will be posted on our website.

**TECHNICAL COORDINATOR'S
WELL MONITORING UPDATE
BGwT Meeting: January 31, 2008**

WELL MONITORING

The BGwT's latest set of readings are indicated below.

There are currently 709 wells in the West network. Wells were read between November 11 – December 13, 2007. Of the 709 wells read:

- 131 wells @ elevation >7'
- 291 wells @ elevation 5'- 7'
- 173 wells @ elevation 3'-5'
- 61 wells @ elevation <3'
- 2 wells @ Dry
- 51 wells @ no reading

We have read 85 wells in the East network (East Boston Area). Wells were read in East Boston on November 8 & 9, 2007. Of the 85 wells read:

- 46 wells @ elevation >7'
- 12 wells @ elevation 5'- 7'
- 7 wells @ elevation 3'-5'
- 10 wells @ elevation <3'
- 10 wells @ Dry

NOTE: We are continuously reading the well network and started a new set of readings this past weekend.

5 New Wells in Bay Village

- We have incorporated 5 wells into the BGwT network in the Bay Village area. These wells were installed by GEI who is working as a consultant on the proposed MBTA Silver Line Phase III.
- GEI and the MBTA have provided the BGwT well location plans and well installation logs.
- Additionally 6-8 wells are proposed for installation in the area during the Spring/Summer 2008. The BGwT will incorporate those at the appropriate time should they be installed.

LEVELOGGERS

- As per agreement with GEI Consultants Inc., loggers (there are a total of 5) installed in and around Cazenove St. continue to be uploaded once a week and sent to GEI Consultants Inc. The purpose is to observe the water levels in the area where the recharge systems have been installed.
- 5 dataloggers have been installed on Beacon St., in the Berkeley to Clarendon St. block. This area (historically) shows a wide range of high and low elevations. We are looking for any trends that may explain this. We recently added a logger in a well that was replaced at the corner of Back and Clarendon St.
- 3 dataloggers have been installed in the North End around Fulton and Commercial streets. Again, we are looking for any trends that may help explain the wide range of elevations over a short distance.

ISD REASEARCH

- We continue to look for any underpinned buildings.
- The search engine has been updated so it takes it a little longer to go though each address. Some features that have been added to narrow down the searches do help when looking for building permits.

NEW PART-TIMER

- Jessica Gormley from Wentworth Institute of Technology has started reading our well network on a part-time basis.