

Boston Groundwater Trust

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August 8, 2012

Ms. Katelyn Sullivan, Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Wentworth Institute of Technology, 525 Huntington Ave

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Project Notification Form for Wentworth's Student Apartment project. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the city where the integrity of building foundations is threatened by low groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. Therefore, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

As the proponent notes in the PNF, the project is located in the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District established under Article 32 of the Zoning Code. I appreciate the proponent's commitment, stated in the PNF and reiterated at the scoping session, to meet all of the requirements for construction in the GCOD. As stated in the document, the project will include a recharge system with the capacity to capture, store, and recharge at least one inch of stormwater. Plans for the system must be submitted to BWSC for approval; a copy of the plans should also be furnished to the trust.

The PNF includes a brief description of steps the proponent plans to take to assure that the project cannot cause a reduction in area groundwater levels, as required under GCOD and particularly important in a neighborhood in which nearby buildings are supported on wood pilings. As required under the GCOD, the proponent should submit a letter, stamped by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts, that describes these steps in more detail and shows that the construction will not cause a reduction in groundwater levels. This letter should be submitted before final approvals are granted under Article 80.

I am pleased with the proponent's plans, as stated in the PNF, to coordinate with the Trust to protect groundwater levels, including the possible installation of new groundwater observation wells in the vicinity of the project. As discussed in the scoping session, addition of two wells at locations chosen in consultation with the Trust will help assure that the project doesn't cause groundwater problems. These wells should be constructed according to Trust standards. They should be monitored regularly for several months before construction to establish a baseline condition and at least weekly during underground construction to make sure that levels are maintained. Results should be reported to the Authority and the Trust shortly after they are taken..

Wentworth has long been an active participant in efforts to identify and overcome low groundwater problems in Boston. I look forward to working with them and their team, as well as the Authority, to assure that this project can have only positive impacts on area groundwater levels.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pedersen, BRA
Maura Zlody, BED