



## A Role-Play

by

Ferdi L. Hellweger  
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department  
Center for Urban Environmental Studies  
Northeastern University  
Boston, Massachusetts

(617) 373-3992  
[ferdi@coe.neu.edu](mailto:ferdi@coe.neu.edu)

Version 1.2  
October 1, 2005

Grade Level: K-12  
Number of Players: 7-29  
Boring or Fun: Fun

## NOTES TO TEACHER

This role play requires some background information on groundwater in Boston. In the past I spent about 10 minutes explaining the issue using a blackboard. Then I introduce the situation (Red Sox want to build a new ballpark), describe the characters and assign characters to all the participants.

Cast [number of players in parentheses]

*For* the new ballpark

- Red Sox [1-3]
- Exact Engineering, Inc. [1-3]
- Warm Hot Dogs Co. [0-3]

*Against* the new ballpark

- Building Owners [1-3]
- Northeastern University [1-3]
- Mayor's Office [0-2]

*Neutral/undecided*

- Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) [3-7, odd number to avoid tie]
- Boston Globe [0-3, good neutral meaningless role for teacher]

Contents

- Game Description (to be handed out to each student)
- Role Cards (to be handed out based on roles)
- Voting Ballots (one for each BRA committee member)

## GAME DESCRIPTION



### A Role-Play

#### **Introduction**

What a year! The Red Sox reversed the curse and won the World Series for the first time in 86 years. Every single Bostonian is happy. Now everyone (even you-know-who) is a Red Sox fan. The owner of the Red Sox (John Henry) wants to build a new larger baseball park in the Back Bay area of Boston. He bought some land and hired an engineering firm (Exact Engineering, Inc.) who designed the new stadium.

However, before construction can begin he needs to get approval from the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). To make a decision, the BRA will hold a public meeting. All the people that are for and against the new stadium are allowed to talk and express their viewpoints. Then the BRA will vote and decide.

The big issue at the meeting will likely be groundwater. Often times big buildings (like stadiums) cause a lowering of groundwater. If the groundwater, which is already low in Boston, gets even lower, more foundations will rot. This would be very costly.

#### **Rules**

The chairman of the BRA is in charge of the public meeting. He/she decides who is allowed to speak. He/she makes the rules.

**DISCLAIMER:** The characters portrayed in this role-play are purely fictional. Any resemblance to real persons, like "you-know-who" or "ahem, wink-wink" is purely coincidental. Also, even if the outcome of this game is that the Red Sox will leave town it will not actually happen.

## ROLE CARD

### Boston Red Sox



#### People:

- Samuel (Sam) Socks, Owner
- Pamela (Pam) Pants, Manager
- Steven (Steve) Shirt, Captain

#### Description

John Henry is the owner of the Boston Red Sox baseball team (2004 World Series Champs, reverse the curse!!!). He is very excited and proud of his baseball team. He does not like the New York Yankees and often accuses people that disagree with him that they are Yankees Fans.

#### Role:

He wants to build a new ballpark in Back Bay. His main arguments are:

- He will make more money, which means he will pay more taxes, which is good for everyone.
- Everyone loves the Red Sox and a bigger stadium means more people can go to the game.
- If he is not allowed to build the new stadium he will move the team somewhere else.

## ROLE CARD

### City of Boston



#### People:

- Rudiger (Rudy) Rule, Mayor
- George Govern, Assistant Mayor

#### Description:

Rudy Rule is very excited about the Red Sox, but he is against the new ballpark. He doesn't think that the new stadium is needed. Maybe if the Patriots could also play at the new stadium, he would support it, but that doesn't seem to be part of the plan.

#### Role:

The mayor's arguments against the new ballpark are:

- The existing stadium is fine. Everyone loves Fenway Park. Keep it the way it is.
- Most people watch the games on TV anyway, and the new stadium would be half empty.

## ROLE CARD

### Engineering Firm Exact Engineering, Inc.



#### People:

- Patricia Precise, Senior Engineer
- Arthur Accurate, Junior Engineer
- Corey Correct, Junior Engineer

#### Description:

Ms. Patricia Precise is a senior engineer for the firm Exact Engineering, Inc. She has a degree in Civil Engineering from Northeastern University and is a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) in the State of Massachusetts. Ms. Precise has over 10 years of experience designing stadiums, including the Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Massachusetts, home of the New England Patriots football team. She has designed the new Red Sox ballpark and fully stands behind her work. Ms. Precise is a very professional and serious person.

#### Arguments

- The design for the new ballpark is good. The building will last for at least 500-years.
- The engineering calculations show that there will be only minor lowering of the groundwater.

## ROLE CARD

### Building Owner



#### People:

- Angela Angry, Building Owner
- Max Mad, Building Owner
- Frank Fuming, Building Owner

#### Description:

Ms. Angela Angry owns a building in Back Bay in Boston. Because of the lowered groundwater, the piles under her house have rotted away. She talked to a contractor (Pile-Replacements-R-Us) and he said it would cost \$250,000 to fix the problem. Because of that, Angela is not in a good mood. She often loses her temper and starts yelling at people.

#### Role

The building owners are totally against the new ballpark. They think the new stadium will make the groundwater problem much worse. We should fix the problem before any new buildings are allowed.

## ROLE CARD

### **Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)**



#### People:

- Frank Fair, Committee Chairman
- Jennifer (Jen) Just, Committee Member
- Rudy Reasonable, Committee Member
- Rebecca (Becky) Rational, Committee Member
- Larry Logical, Committee Member
- Ralf Realistic, Committee Member
- Susan (Sue) Sensible, Committee Member

#### Description:

The BRA decides what development to allow in Boston. It listens to all the arguments for and against a certain development and then votes anonymously for or against a certain project. Mr. Frank Fair is the chairman of the board. He is very serious and doesn't like when people talk without his permission.

#### Role:

At public meetings the chairman (Frank Fair) does the following things:

- He opens meeting by welcoming everyone.
- He decides who is allowed to speak. Typically he gives about 5 minutes to all the people, starting with the people that are for the project (e.g. Red Sox) and ending with the people that are against it. Then he may allow anybody to ask anybody questions.
- When he feels everybody had a chance to speak, he asks the board members to vote, counts the votes and announces the results of the vote.
- He closes the meeting by thanking everyone for attending the meeting.

## ROLE CARD

Newspaper  
Boston Globe

# The Boston Globe

### People:

- Neill Nosy, Sports Reporter
- Carroll Curious, Assistant Sports Reporter
- Ingrid Interested, Photographer

### Description:

Neill is a reporter for the Boston Globe. He writes articles for the Sports section of the paper. He is attending the meeting, because he thinks that the readers of the Sports section would be very interested in learning about a new stadium. He wants to make sure that he is the first to break any news about the story before the Boston Herald does. Neill is very nervous about loosing the story to the Herald and can't sit still in his chair. To keep busy he takes many pictures.

### Role

The reporters have lots of questions, like "Are the Red Sox going to leave town if this deal falls through?", but are only allowed to talk when the BRA chairman says so.

## ROLE CARD

University  
Northeastern University



**Northeastern**  
U N I V E R S I T Y

### People:

- Wendy Wise, Professor
- Karl Knowledge, Graduate Student
- Sarah Science, Graduate Student

### Description:

Professor Wendy Wise is a world-famous expert on water. She has written many books on water. She teaches in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at Northeastern University. Professor Wise is getting old and often confuses things. She often talks and talks and talks until she forgets what he is talking about... Then she says “what was the question again?” and her students giggle.

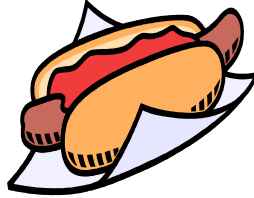
### Role

Professor Wise was hired by the City of Boston to review the engineering design of the new stadium by Exact Engineering, Inc.. She concludes that:

- The stadium design is OK. The building will not crumble, even if the crowd gets rowdy when the Yankees are in town.
- It is not true that the impact on groundwater level will only be minor. It may be a little more.

## ROLE CARD

### Hot Dog Vendor Warm Hot Dogs Co.



#### People:

- Terry Terrier, Vendor
- Paul Poodle, Vendor
- Hansel Husky, Vendor

#### Description

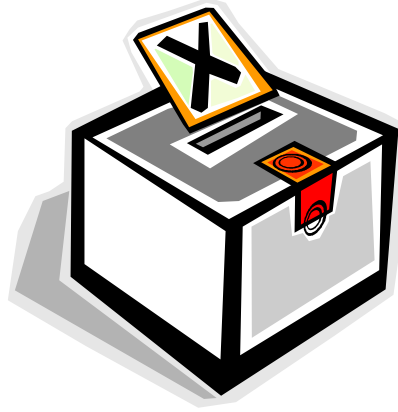
Terry Terrier is a hot dog vendor. He makes all of his money during baseball games. If a larger stadium is built more people will come to the game and he will make more money. He doesn't think there should be a meeting like this. Just build the new ballpark, hopefully in time for the next season.

#### Role:

Terry is totally for the new ballpark. He doesn't understand what "all the fuss" is about. A new ballpark would be great. To try to persuade the BRA he promises to give away free hot dogs on opening day of the new ballpark.

# VOTING BALLOT

## Voting Ballot



(circle one choice)

I am ...

FOR

AGAINST

... the new ballpark.