

11.945 Springfield Studio

Session 6 Notes

Lecturers: Ceasar McDowell

Reading Review / Work Session: Springfield Political Context

1. Harry Spence HCED Lunch 2005
2. News articles TBA

Questions from the Readings

- a. What cautions came up from reading these materials?
- b. Was anything revealed about the legitimacy of people we need to talk to?
- c. What is the role of the relationship between the neighborhood trying to do this economic development plan and the control board?
- d. How would you advise the Campus Committee on how to interact with the control board?

Springfield Control Board

- a. Headed by Doug Foy and Eric Kriss; both have connections to the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning
 - a. Ceasar and Karl invited by Doug Foy to meet with the Control Board strategy session
 - b. The main focus is around cost-saving and new economic activity
 - i. City contracts rewritten
 1. Reduce government inefficiencies
 2. Spur private investment
 - ii. Need to attract middle-class residents back to the city
 - c. Karl and Ceasar point out that the low-income neighborhoods in the city are well-organized and an important resource
 - i. Need to develop an economic development strategy with the people in the community
 - d. A neighborhood-based approach was agreed on.
 - i. The city mayor is not in favor of this strategy
- b. Neighborhood-based Strategy
 - a. Jim Sturgiss headed research and data collection to choose neighborhoods
 - i. Local organizations worked to provide the data they were looking for.
 - b. Neighborhoods:
 - i. Mason Square
 1. The state worked closely with the Mason Square neighborhood when they were putting together the control board. They have organizations that state and

regional agencies know how to work with (e.g. the Urban League)

- ii. North End
 - 1. Herbie Flores and the New North Citizens Council were the primary contacts
- iii. South End (not the main focus)
- c. Strategy announced by Doug Foy at June press conference
 - i. no specifics laid out
- d. Remaining question:
 - i. How much of the money targeted will be part of reallocations across city departments and how much is available for neighborhood development?
- c. Insider/outsider perspective of the control board.
 - a. The challenge for control board members is that because they are not community members, they don't fully understand the issues, people don't trust them
 - b. In a way this class faces the same types of challenges as outsiders
- d. Relationship between control board and the course
 - a. The control board has been instructed to work with this class in developing their economic development plan for the North End.
 - i. Will start attending Campus Committee meetings and become part of that Committee in some sense.
 - b. They are not seeing the structures of the North End, they don't understand it, but
 - i. They have a set of resources, and
 - ii. They will allocate them with or without the help of the class.
 - c. Class Task:
 - i. Minimum: create a dialogue with the Control Board
 - ii. Broader: engage with the Board more actively to get it to think about something more comprehensive.
 - 1. Inform the process of restructuring so that the neighborhood benefits (or at least is not hurt by the decisions)
 - iii. Help the Campus Committee
 - 1. Determining who is responsible for what
 - 2. Thinking about what kinds of opportunities will come out of the restructuring process
 - 3. The neighborhood has lots of one-on-one connections that don't get built into structural relationships between organizations. The people you talk to will probably know everyone but will not have built a structural relationship that connects how that board is going to work with what the neighborhood is trying to do.

School System Issues

Article:

"3 schools targeted for state takeover" Boston Globe. Sept. 27, 2005.

- a. The state may take over some schools in Springfield, Holyoke, Fall River.
- b. There is an increasing sense of the community not having any viable institutions that someone else doesn't control.
- c. One idea that has been floated at the state level was to create a self-contained K-12 educational system in the North End neighborhood (Charter System).
 - a. One of the appealing things about a city-wide project is that you can get some big conceptual ideas going, but they worry that at the neighborhood level it would not be possible to do that. There is a feeling that things really need to be shaken up in order for things not to go right back where they were.

Questions for Moving Forward

- a. Who do you think is in charge in the neighborhood?
- b. Who do you need to convince?