

Cruising the Commonwealth
Springfield
August 1, 2017
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

JWI - Introductions and background of CTC Idea Overview of the past few meetings

Introductions

What the trends in the other meetings are:

Education

Small project

historic homeowners

historic tax credits

networking - creating connections - like the Western Massachusetts Historic Commissions Coalition

Preservation Challenge:

SPT- most of the west, deteriorated building, cost of rehab usually exceeds the market value after it is fixed, funding gap, competition to fill the gap, current admin in Springfield doesn't help with that.

Interested in other things.

Economics that it cost more to fix that its worth and disinterest by the government in HP

Second is educational.

JWI having DevelopSpringfield should help.

JM- have had some success, it is true that it really is a challenge in a weak market, benefit from grants and being able to take more risk, but still, there is a piece that you have to finance, so the numbers at some point still have to work. in a weak market it remains a challenge, esp. in buildings that are in an advanced state of disrepair.

challenge in place like Springfield, but for DS- no one else would do it. We hope to stimulate ultimately, he makes and develop it, in communities like this, when a bldg. starts to deteriorate, but for special users or buyers the value isn't there (economic), programs like the PLF is helpful, hard dollars get (!!!) those things are great, and we are al starting to stack up the MHRTC's and Spfdl adopted the CPA last year, what is the amount and what is the

Market conditions need to improve

get more buy in from larger institutions - hospitals, universities, they have a responsibility and not sure how to get that, a challenge but it should be done.

Colleges, they buy to tear down, not to rehabilitate.

don't have a strong history of mothballing to save, like Lowell. If its vacant, we don't want to see it anymore. - is there a way to change attitude for saving later

Lowell is unique with the market, and other factors, and other factors that other cities are still struggling with.

Lowell, still naysayers. How do we make the case for historic preservation when even in Lowell which is so successful, they can't get all on board?

PVPC - preservation education, making the connection with sustainable design, way of broadening the conversation.

JM- exactly right, conversation that Pam and I have had, connection and very important. The other is understanding that it isn't preservation over here, but preservation in a planning context, it's about community character, place, etc.

EK- this has been brought up at other meetings, etc.

DS- Boston 20/30 plan, no preservation section in the 2030 plan... stunning that there is no preservation plan in a 400-year-old city.

(BPA- get on it!)

BH- anything else in that 2030 plan that is aligned with what the preservationist does? but in other language, that get to the same point?

2030- focus on neighborhoods and new development...

Surprising?

CPA in Springfield - came out of the preservation community (city council was receptive) on ballot, a steering committee heavily - what resonated with the public (62% of vote) it passed in every ward, every neighborhood and 63 out of 64 precincts... Cleary was something that resonated...

estimate about a million

Campanile was front and center for the CPA.... newspaper saw that as a project...

\$20 million project

CPA is bigger than the - preservation was in the public discourse around the election

Newspaper comments - negative comments focused on not needing more section 8 housing, it can be used for housing for a whole range of people in the community, but used for other things, open space and historic preservation. and talked about how some of those things can be combined, public historic sites not accessible, mentioned that you could also be used to make HP places accessible, give a broad range of possibilities and agree it's difficult to know why they voted for it, I think it is accurate to say they had a variety of reasons, not a one interested program, it can address a variety of needs in our city.

JWI- amazing that it got passed, there is so much preservation influence with CPA in Springfield, very positive.

BM- negative comment from the mayor, he feels like all preservation funding requests should go through CPA, it shouldn't be one source of funding for preservation projects

CPA- with Boston in the mix, NB was concerned about the state match on the funds. Rationale for Boston's involvement who will hopefully be there to vote the state match increase.

Other challenges that you see.

BM- recent development pressure in the south end, tear downs and it's all speculative, lots of property that is being torn down. Lots of pressure because of the high way, but nothing like they are seeing now. Very worrisome, and because of the Casino.

City Council, created 6 or 7 new local historic districts over the past five years. but when it comes to developers to have their inability to knock things down, the council is less likely to create LHD. Multiple developers, the CC and Mayor won't go against these people.

PH- practitioner of preservation, Windows Institute - training women in the work force, problems with preservation, isn't seen as workforce development. Not seen as environmental and climate change related. Not seen as related to economic development and entrepreneurship overall. If you are just talking preservation, your chances of connecting are slim to none... If you begin to see preservation it's hand work... If preservationists can talk to city councils, PVPC, etc., preservation is tool for planning, environmental, economics, etc.

Looking to the future - connecting preservation to environmental activism, jobs, anti-poverty issues in cities, etc. We need to learn from what is going on in the rest of the country.

JWI - talking about preservation being green, preservation should not just be one silo, things that work hand and glove with preservation. CS was talking about land conservation and how they do things differently (nonprofit model)

CS- Land trust discussion.

jump starting a different talk- one thing to get across was the direction the preservation community went down 50 years ago, vs land trust -municipal govt vs small nonprofit organizations.

today the distinction is still there

400 or so local land trusts in MA (more than cities and towns)

Their priorities are flipped from where we are. Our priorities are reactive, we feel badly, always a reactive stance we are taking. look at the land protection community, they react sometimes, but their focus and priorities is working with property owners, developing partnerships, fundraising, holding events and getting people excited, social things to bring people together and to get them excited. Whether directly related to land protection or not,

The idea is flipped - like the idea of local nonprofits- like SPT - models here that should be replicated in other parts of the state. local NP can be a much better advocate

Conservation commission- only wetlands act

the local nonprofit org is needed to counter and be part of the mix. the idea that a 3-5-member Board appointed by mayor, city council, auto sets up some issues with priorities and personalities (not necessarily in preservation in the best interested) Much stronger and get the message across better.

BH- museum and Non-Profit work - bittersweet ironies of 1966 preservation act, is that people began to see something the govt does, or involves tax credits and it's something that isn't

Massachusetts History Alliance - Bay State League (this group hoping to re -do - fell apart in 1990's)

how to coalesce to this group and bring them together. Divide the state into 7 regions - active regional heritage groups. Get other ones going as well. History Camp - real bottom up effort (activities all around

the country) some of it is preservation, some genealogy, some history, a day with a handful of sessions, great idea- cheap - real activists.

Concerns, that when preservation was enshrined in law, something that govt and nonprofits to - divorced itself from the rest of the heritage community, hundreds of organizations and groups in the state. Biggest challenge - education, advocacy and making people care- what would it take to get the preservation, conservation, environmental community back together, so we see each other as a team, advocating for what makes Massachusetts special.

Activism involved with the heritage community, environmental

What other techniques are being done successfully elsewhere that can be brought to Springfield

Cultural heritage - Polish center started with a group of people - restoration took a building that had been abandoned (Chicopee) people did the work themselves - the

partnered with Elms College -

Cultural history - capture what cultures brought to the community -

What can PM do for that

-WE can do a better job of promoting HP as a vehicle for celebrating cultural heritage (NB),

Most Endangered- the two churches in Worcester

Celebrating cultural heritage

WE need to do more and better in this area.

New Bedford - what is the secret sauce

Slow and Steady....

SPT- there is always an uphill battle

What is the number of historic groups like WAHLE

local nonprofit is the first foothold for us when we are taking on a challenge in a community.

Don't want to say that is easy to make links with cultural groups or others, sometimes it just takes a phone call or a letter, for example at UMass, a course thought, something like Black Springfield. - sends students to city to research AA history and building, other similar courses that look at various communities to find out that those things exist, these students produce papers, it's still a lot of useful information in the documents that a group like SPT could make use of, or other groups.

Second thing, one of the things committed to SPT, reach out to groups like neighborhood housing services and other community based organizations, some have national linkages, homeowner education. part of preservation we don't talk about is the maintenance and repair, and many homeowners must care for their properties and they are not sure how to do it. Workshops on home owner maintenance and repair

and shows people how to do it on their own. If they knew how they would be willing to do the repairs on themselves. groups like neighborhood housing services, and others and various groups...

grant money from banks to finance these kinds of workshops. banks need to give back.

One of the unfortunate things is that people don't want to be involved with low income cities and owners.

Lack of outreach with proper information - with social media and connections with different organizations to bring this, here and then make it public - utilizing social media to hand out leaflets to get the word out - when we leave here there is another place - utilize the events of the summer - to outreach and get the word out - different communities and get them invested and involved - how to make it relevant to them? Do these groups even know. how successful can we be?

Maybe we need to have some public relations officer for media person who can get the word out about this and not just trying to get the word in, but also make people see, and bring the resources here, you have resources, people interested in using them word spreads. once people see them being used successfully, word of mouth, we may have a lot success.

How much money we spend in public education, in those communities that recognize there was a value-added factor if you want to vote tech, look at the beautiful homes, architecture going to waste....

Bought a Victorian, went looking for a tradesman to do the work, went to the trade school, took a long time, are their craftsman who can replace that? Computer scanning for replicating historic elements.

Trade School -the next generation of craftsman — old skills and new technology

stimulate the education of the next generation....

want to envision getting to the next step: build into the curriculum - Polish Center utilized the trade school for the outside of the Polish Center - (Success story!)

Bloomberg radio, apprenticeship programs, right now there is a shortage of skilled labor, 6 million jobs in the next 5 years - there is a need and a shortage. Why not combine the shortages of skills with preservation because the understanding is when they started the casino, they couldn't find people within the community who had the skills to work at the site? There is a need, people what to preserve the area... reach out... the colleges. how can we make it work? Abandoned buildings, that is one place to start -

Skilled and trade labor

Springfield - Why did we get into the preservation business - CPA-... a lot of things that never made the cut for budget

watched Agawam start to move with the CPA.

Hung up on doing something with affordable housing aspect,

Way finders - workforce housing, decent affordable homes can keep city employees in the city, suddenly workforce housing, a different approach

think outside of the committee, outside the box... look at other partnerships, talking among the board and appointed groups you can find out some interesting things...

Get outside of ourselves... make it work, uncover some new things and turn over some logs...

SM - big themes in coalitions, landscape preservation conference in Salem, very interesting, it could be other themes... like half preservation and half environmental. 400 small land trusts, phrase "networked governance" how can they work with local, state, regional govt.

Collaboration, etc. the takes support, don't think PM can do that. It is a regional issue, if we want to train workers to train them, info sharing.

What is PVPC think in terms of preservation planning in the valley? What does SPT think about outside the Borders of the city, what is practical for the region. Think about regions in the state. Way to facilitate the conversation going forward - possibility to do more.

from Northampton, groups and commissions, historic society, land conservation, planning, non-preservation nonprofit, I think it's complicated, how do you facilitate the conversation? How do you hear these conversations? PVPC and MHC, even SPT. Get across some of the city and town boundaries....

PVPC - involved with WMHCC and the MPC,

What are some of the venues for continuing this and keep it going... West Mass, what is the region, what to attract, quality of life in local communities, same questions all around. Relationship between what is happening in each, we are all interconnected, maybe it does go back to creating a variety of ways people can help each other out...

WMHCC - how to connect and network with more people and groups to keep the conversation going...

connecting better... and who can facilitate that....

Statewide conference for people to get together and make connections at the statewide conference.... - networking... regional meet ups— to keep the conversation going...

Someone who may know influential people, and based on what has been discussed here, the wheel is trying to be reinvented, putting it on a vehicle to move... these people could be reached out to, this is what is being discussed, how can they get on Board, how can you help their organization to get funding or be put in contact with the decision makers so that is being discussed doesn't use stay in the room, but start being worked on. because from what I've heard, I haven't heard discussion aggressively reaching out to politicians or influential community leaders. Banks are obligated to put money back in their communities, how to put outreach to them, and someone else talked about MHC, who can they be reached out to. The thing is to combine those businesses outreach with the political outreach, even though some of them may not be in favor, may decide to go along to get along, if you are serious, ID where your resources are to utilize, those may turn you on to other resources.

For example, if a concession can be made, let's start reaching out to elected officials to see how they can start working to help this organization achieve its goals.

Suggest, seeing if there are people here who are interested in making this happen, share the emails of who came here, (email if we can share the emails of all meeting attendees).

Cultural geography of MA - people are more likely to care close to home. Mention preservation organizations, continue to make the point that almost every community has a local history organization (maybe not known or thought of as preservation) the way the preservation community buildings connective tissue between the world of preservation and the existing one of hundreds of historic organizations (historical society) they are not getting education, and their needs being met. When the head of the national trust for historic preservation (Dick Moe) too many house museums. - looking for a sense of partnership and encouragement.

JM- like the idea of creating a network or coalition - disseminating information - heritage groups, the connection between place and people is essential - I know people personally connect with preservation and place - if I didn't know

Disseminating information - general knowledge

where to turn for window restoration in western ma

regional resource list, where people can share stories or ideas, social media, how to create it, a platform for dialogue - and being able to share resources, etc.

Social media, how would it look like

CS - networking —there has to be a regional aspect. other planning groups are Regional level - a platform for people to share...

JWI- how can we have this grow, and bring in other silos so we can all share and at the end of the day because we're all after the same thing.

Connecting people to the resources - promote the resources and the connections.

Massachusetts Preservation Coalition saw the opportunity to bring in as many preservation colleagues as possible, great things came from that. IF we did nothing else, that would be great.

MHRTC, historic religious properties - now the MHPC

How to best connect people? Regional ally and a platform that is easy to share and connect on.

Partners network idea

This has been a thought provoking experience.

Roberta at SPT - go around ID properties in need of repair. There is money that will go into addressing those issues, once these buildings have been ID'd as needing the help and the money is coming in to seeing the properties, the shortage of skilled people in the community (apprenticeship program) when the money comes forward, they have the money and young people who can do the work? How do you combine those aspects, the money is coming, it will be done, to source your community for the services...?

Tech schools, carpentry schools. for preservation work - making opportunities for young folks in apprenticeship programs, how to bring the projects to the schools.... helping people doing the repairs. What can you do?

A section on the website where people can put up vendors and information and artisan listing - one that is more regional for people who can do the work....

connecting people to the resources. -

Bob McCarroll, PST we have it, comes by recommendation of members, it can be a resource for people outside Springfield - they will travel in the valley

National Preservation Standards Committee - good for writing specs, arch need to be encouraged to incorporate preservation standards.

So uncomplicated...