

Fall 2003

11.401 Introduction to Housing, Community and Economic
Development

Memo III

Due at 5 PM Monday December 8

Option I Working Neighborhoods

"Working Neighborhoods: Taking Charge of Your Local Economy," has been used to promote neighborhood-based economic development.

The handbook has come to the attention of John Street, the recently re-elected Mayor of that city e years ago. Street faces an urban landscape with serious economic problems: loss of jobs, middle-class population, deteriorating housing stock, regional growth at the expense of the central city, and so on. You know the scene.

Always looking for new ways to confront the challenges before him, Mayor Street is intrigued by the handbook. At present Philadelphia is using its public funds, primarily CDBG, to promote housing rehabilitation and to encourage private investment in the city's neighborhoods. Michael Porter has made frequent visits and the Mayor has been impressed by his approach to the economic problems confronting the neighborhoods.

The Mayor asks you, the seasoned but unbowed veteran of community development working in his administration, to give your views of "Working Neighborhoods:" how he, the Mayor,

ought to think about the approaches and strategies presented in the Handbook. Your job then is to provide Mayor Street with a critical, balanced examination of the assumptions, analysis and prescriptions contained in "Working Neighborhoods."

Does the Handbook's message apply to Philadelphia's problems? What should Street take from the analysis, if anything, and why? What, if anything, is left out of the approach? And so on....

In four pages or less of the usual tight, concise, pointed prose tell the Mayor what you think and why.

Wherever you come out in your view be sure to make a concise, analytic argument for the position.

Option II: Forget the Hood-Focus on the People

"Why Improve Neighborhoods? Shifting the Goals of Inner City Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization," by Andy Waxman (MIT/MCP) has come to the attention of John Street, the Philadelphia Mayor of that city. Street faces an urban landscape with serious economic problems: loss of jobs, middle-class population, deteriorating housing stock, regional growth at the expense of the central city, and so on. You know the scene.

Always looking for new ways to confront the challenges before him, Street is intrigued by Waxman's message. At present Philadelphia is using its public funds, primarily CDBG, to promote housing rehabilitation and economic

development in the city's neighborhoods using CDCs as the primary vehicle for production. As a "man from the neighborhoods" Street has a history of working with nonprofit organizations. But he is becoming increasingly concerned that his approach, focusing on the neighborhoods to the exclusion of the rest of the city and the region, may be an incorrect strategy.

The Mayor (once again!) asks you, the seasoned but unbowed veteran of community development working in his administration, to give your views of Waxman's article: how he, the Mayor, ought to think about the approaches and strategies presented in the paper. Your job then is to provide Mayor Street with a critical, balanced examination of the assumptions, analysis and prescriptions contained in the document.

Does Waxman's message apply to Philadelphia's problems? What should Street take from the analysis, if anything, and why? Is it truly anti-neighborhood? What, if anything, is left out of the approach? And so on....

In four pages or less of the usual tight, concise, pointed prose tell the Mayor what you think and why. Again analysis-, step by step- as to where you end up is what it is all about

Option III: Bridging and Bonding

The effort has been made throughout the term to look at "neighborhood issues and institutions" through the social capital lens set out in the first class. (See Keyes, "Housing, Social Capital and Poor Communities"-September

10th reading- for a refresher.) You are a student in 11.401 who has been asked by your professor to write a critique of the approach:

Has it been useful? If so where and how? Has it not been useful? If so where and how?

In four pages or less of the usual tight, concise, pointed prose tell your professor what you think and why. Use specific examples and be analytic.