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- Tonight we have a guest Craig Kelley, the city councilor, for Cambridge, MA.
- He’ll discuss how the city will work with business towards SD
- Chair of sub-council on traffic/transportation
- If business don’t get customers they go out of business
- Printing company used by Mr. Kelley is up in Porter Square in Cambridge which is located next to old railroad tracks/old industrial site that supported the cattle-slaughterhouse industry, ice industry, etc.
- Print shops in current situation is facing competition and if you own the land, the real estate is tremendously expensive, which is under intense pressure to get converted into condominiums which will lead to a loss of small, local businesses.
- The City is facing a problem because a potential loss of commercial businesses and their tax dollar
- Pedestrian/walk by traffic brings in business to some industries (coffee shops)- drawn in by bistro/sidewalk seating
- A print shop, on the other hand, can’t be supported by walk-in businesses
- City can help print company by advertising on city internet, send bids for business it’s way for city business, but consumers have more options and will go for the lowest cost which is not necessarily going to be in Cambridge unless they can offer something unique.
- Cambridge is very urban and has high traffic congestion- so businesses are clambering for more parking to bring in more businesses both from other neighborhoods in Cambridge but also outside the town.
- So the conflict between parking-residential/commercial mixed with high real estate prices and demand for housing (largely rental) is very real & does not currently have a good solution.
- Traffic congestion is also involved in this issue because when there are more demand for on street parking, people are going to shop in the suburbs and once you are in your car it becomes a lot easier to go further. So the trick is to bring people into the city, give them a place to park, but them make them walk once they have parked so they become walk-in traffic.
- Another thing Cambridge has to worry about is Harvard University because they are a large property owner (MIT, too). These universities bought these buildings years ago, but now Harvard is looking for dormitory space/office space it could shut out more regular businesses that would bring in a more diverse shopping clientele.
- From a regulatory perspective, you can’t regulate a use if that use is not viable.
- ?: It sounds like you are talking about economics as being the biggest impediment for business, but is there anything a city can do that can make up for the high tax rate against these businesses.
- What the city can control is zoning and public parking.
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- How can you retain character by promoting local, small businesses?
- Nantucket, MA just banned chain stores- as an example.
- A good example is the Brattle Theater, which is a local movie theater that showcases unusual films and is a central element to Harvard Square, but is economically in trouble.
- One thing that Harvard Square has going for is its architecture.
- P: If tax rate has to go up for the citizens because the businesses leave, the residents will get upset. What do you discuss to keep these businesses in business at the city council level?
- The city council’s big impact is on zoning. But it seems that if you zone so that it does not favor high impact residential development, you can try to mitigate this issue. But it is difficult because the property owners are against this type of down zoning.
- 9 city councils represented for all Cambridge
- City Manager runs the town- mayor is largely symbolic. City Manager asks committees to write up policies that are voted upon by the city councilors, but City Manager sets the agenda.
- Does industry come to the city council to talk about their problems?
- The Chamber of Commerce does come to the city council- and Chamber is currently working on a “buy local” campaign and there is another “shop local first” campaign which is not supported by the city (?) where you can get coupons that are worth money in the locally owned stores- as part of these campaigns they educate the public by showing how much money stays in the community if you buy local.
- The City does have some programs like “façade improvement” program that can be used by local businesses to make their exteriors more appealing and may bring in more business.
- Other issues are the big companies in the area like the biotechs that are huge employers and bring in lots of business and revenue- and they have special needs like strong power grid, water treatment, etc. which do not necessarily promote mom/pop businesses.
- And these people need a place to park- and that is something that the City can provide.
- The Concord Street/Fresh Pond Area/Alewife is a large area that is being re-zoned currently- this could be an opportunity for the City to try to address some of these issues. Lots of property owners in this area and the city is trying to get more development in this transit corridor but the City should position itself so that it can be attractive to development.
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- This is an opportunity for the City to be strategic for a long-term plan for when residential growth squeezes out local business in the eastern/biotech areas.
- Could this become an opportunity for a city owned/operated/directed transportation scheme?
- Zoning changes could also become an opportunity to promote newer technological advances
- City is the only one who can frame this development because residential building associations want more housing options which is a race to the bottom
- City can leverage its affordable housing unit laws
- Most of the development is 1 to 2 bedroom units, but need to have more diversity of housing options ie 3, 4 bedroom units, affordable housing, artists space, etc.
- The next 20 year city plan is going to be challenging because the old tried-true zoning standards are now outdated in this economic/development climate. But property owners do not have that long term thinking because housing market is so volatile and the incentive is to cash out when prices are high.
- Cambridge is at risk to become an urban suburb if lose the local small unique businesses.
- A better school system in Cambridge would also be useful to attracting good residents that would want to live locally.
- Condo housing is very transient because they tend to come in, buy, live for a few years, and then sell- so you don’t get the long term, steady population, that really makes a community.
- Also it is important to recognize that once something goes condos or dorms, there is really no going back.
- The City has competing needs but the city only has power over the land use- so if we want a particular look in the city can we zone in ground floor retail? But that doesn’t mean that the city can control what retail goes in- it could go chain store where the services remain in tucked but the profits go outside of the industry.
- ?: When you were voted in as a council- how did you choose this committee?
- Mr. Kelley requested it- if we could fix the parking issues, a large problem would be solved. For example the city could except Zip Car from parking tickets which would promote its use with the city.
- City could buy property and buy parking gargages
- ?: CRP talked about installing showers to incentives bike riding.
- This does work.
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- The city could stripe parking for smaller cars which would make larger cars have a more difficult time to park which making more spaces for smaller cars.
- Cambridge needs to think about moving people and not move cars.
- Get a red line/blue line connector
- Centralized parking
- Provide value for the smaller, unique businesses that give Cambridge its quality.
- Affordable housing is also an issue because Cambridge is one of the most expensive places to live, so if we could figure out how to house people less expensively, we would also promote local businesses.

END HOUR ONE

- Semester papers are due in less than a month
- If you are nervous about your topic and want help, please email Dr. Pojasek
- Your semester papers must cover all the material/topics in the case
- There was material posted this week even though you had a midterm that will be helpful for you in upcoming weeks so I suggest that you read it.
- City of Cambridge has a Climate Change City Plan that was a noble idea that had a check list of voluntary (160) things, but they could have done more by perhaps facilitating the implementation of the better ideas so that they go from ideas to actions.
- DO you have a link posted to the Cambridge plan?
- The link is in the Cambridge week. But if you go to the city of Cambridge- if you go to community development-then the environment section, it is there.
- In order to move down the path to SD, you got to do something.
- What is the founding moment that would lead the city to do something?
- CRP is trying to do something through the owners- it could be an environmental management plan, a social development plan, etc. but it has got to be something that can then be built upon and get better and better.
- Promoting local businesses in important for their tax base as well forming the fabric of the community.
- Unless you organize enough people to get critical mass, you aren’t going to make a bigger difference?
- Perhaps- but it has got to start somewhere and you talk about it and get other people involved.
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- A lot of it becomes a word of mouth
- ?: A lot of people could support local business that new more about it?
- If small businesses ban together they might get more mass and get things done.
- MacLain’s article on environmental management and the “quest to become 100% in compliance”- is a bit of a fallacy because there is no organization that is 100% in compliance all the time. But the point of that article is that environmental managers are guilty of no strategic thinking and they are perceived as a necessary expense to meet regulation.
- Environmental Impact Statement was part of any new development project- Homeland Security decided that Env. Impact Statements were not beneficial and too much information was given in EIS’s that would make them vulnerable, of the most vulnerable sites are now absolved from EIS.
- SD done right is strategic thinking because it will meet the current needs with the foresight for future generations.
- Executive Order 13148 has a section 202 that says you should come into compliance by preventing the need to be compliance in the first place- PREVENTION!!!
- Coffee beans the seed inside a berry, but you need to get rid of the berry to get to the bean. Normally, the berries are put in a big vat and hit them with high pressure water. All the beans sink, the berry’s get discharge to local surface rivers which has a huge environmental impact on the local rivers. But there is another way- you can put the berries out on blankets in the sun and when they shrivel up, you can rake them up and get the beans. You now don’t have to comply with water treatment regulations because you no longer have wastewater. But this technique is not widespread.
- You need to look at the process in order to change to process- this is innovation.
- A law in MA requires pollution prevention- but it is not necessarily enforced.
- Do you need to make laws to change the environment? Can you do it with innovation, make money from it, and move development closer to sustainability?
- In order to have a SD program, you have to have SD projects. And those projects need to be related to each other. They need to be run in a consistent way, and quality management tools allow you to create a cohesive program.
- Harvard finished in 9th place for buying alternate fuels- they did this by having an initiative. They didn’t look at the top ten energy uses at Harvard.
- There is a difference between a project and an initiative- projects try to tackle the root cause. Initiatives tend to change behaviors to mitigate impacts.
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- Projects can take more work and more time, but they involve people to a deeper level which are more likely to get you further.
- For the upcoming weeks, there will be new folders on the discussion board that will allow you to try to solve the problems- but you will still be graded primarily on your case discussion.
- Encourage you to think about innovation, strategic innovation, it needs help, and you will have the tools to make a contribution.
- The ultimate test is how to make a business case because it is how you can convince business leaders to endorse and see value in your actions.
- Use quality tools, de-brief each project with lesson’s learned so you don’t keep repeating problems, try to avoid best practices because they are a running target- instead focus on your processes and work towards making them eco-efficient, work towards continuous improvements, harness employee’s ideas, have management involved, and address all responsibilities.
- You had in the environmental section and few standards. In the Social section you had an ISO standard. COSO is a financial management standard. There is a new British Standard 8900 being written by Simon Zega so you can keep your eyes open for it, and you will need to integrate this new standard into your efforts.