

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

11.439 Revitalizing Urban Main Streets
Spring 2009

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.

MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Spring 2009
11.439 Revitalizing Urban Main Streets

Karl Seidman and Susan Silberberg-Robinson

Reflection #7
Critical Moments: Personal Understanding

We have spent almost four months engaged in a planning process to shape the economic and physical revitalization of the St. Claude Avenue Main Streets District. During this time we have collaborated with the project client, sought out and engaged in dialogue with the District stakeholders, set a planning agenda and developed plan elements as well as crafted an implementation plan for moving forward. The process has included on-site field work, public meetings, intensive outreach efforts, research and a collaborative class effort.

As we complete our work for St. Claude Main Streets, we seek to examine these experiences this semester by looking at the “critical moments” of this planning process. Critical moments reflection moves from experiences to articulating your emerging ideas about what it means to be a planner and to manage a planning process. In this effort, we ask that you identify events, experiences, activities, or any other specific occurrence (even something *not* happening) that stand out as significant in the evolution of your understanding of planning and your role in the profession.

Please list those *specific* moments (events, experiences, turning points, frustrations, etc.) you experienced as most significant to your developing sense of what it means to “plan”, how you see yourself as a planner, and your personal “theory” of what it means to be an effective planner. Please list the moments specifically; identify concrete moments, no matter if they last minutes, hours, days, or months. (For example: “building a relationship with the community” is not specific; “going to the first community meeting” is, and so is “the moment in the first meeting when I didn’t know what to say.”) How did this moment inform your understanding of planning, shift your perception of your role in the profession and your theory or belief about good planning practice?

In addition to enjoying some bread pudding, we will then pick two or three critical moments from the list as the ones we feel are most important to examine more closely. We will ask that members of the class recount stories of those moments and we will explore deeper questions or issues these raise.