CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Reclaiming Urban Renewal:
Community Efforts and Impacts in Lawrence, Massachusetts and Other Industrial Cities

Date: Saturday, May 7, 2016
Location: Everett Mills, 15 Union Street, Lawrence
Proposal Deadline: Friday, December 4, 2015
Contact(s): Susan Grabski, Lawrence History Center, director@lawrencehistory.org
Professor Robert Forrant, UMass Lowell, robert_forrant@uml.edu

How has urban renewal shaped Lawrence, Massachusetts and other industrial cities since the Second World War? This symposium will focus on Lawrence and other mid-size industrial cities affected by federal and state urban renewal programs, the tear-down of aging housing stock, highways being constructed through neighborhoods, and the destruction of long-established immigrant communities.

Background: Following the Second World War, and continuing into the early 1970s, urban renewal referred primarily to public attempts to revitalize aging and decaying inner cities. Efforts included massive demolitions and neighborhood clearance, and often proceeded from local, state and federal legislation. The state sometimes provided assistance in relocating residents in targeted neighborhoods. The federal Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954, and their later amendments, provided a national framework and greater financial resources for the “renewal effort”.

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, urban renewal is defined as “a strategy for redeveloping and revitalizing substandard, decaden and blighted open areas for residential, commercial, industrial, business, governmental, recreational, educational, hospital or other uses” and is guided by state law. Municipalities—through their urban renewal agencies—may undertake public actions to address these conditions and “to create the environment needed to attract and support private development and promote sound growth in designated neighborhoods.”

Possible topic include, but are not limited to:

- Role of neighborhood involvement in early and current efforts at urban renewal
- Neighborhood resistance to urban renewal and the ways in which community development as a field evolved as a result
- How did Lawrence, Massachusetts (or other industrial cities) respond to their changing economies and aging housing stock post-World War II?
- Displacement and resettlement of established neighborhoods both inside and outside of city limits
- The politics and legislation of historic preservation vs. urban renewal
- Who sits at the urban renewal decision-making table and when in the process?
- Urban renewal: democratic processes vs. market forces
- Urban renewal case studies
- Urban renewal and ‘white flight’
- The impacts of urban renewal on immigrant and ethnic landscapes
- How cities reuse urban spaces today
- Post-Second World War urban decline and its effect on ‘main street’
• The automobile and its impact on urban redevelopment planning
• The effects of government-subsidized suburbanization on the post-war city
• Historic and cultural preservation and their urban renewal roots
• Affordable housing
• Gentrification and social sustainability: compatible or mutually exclusive?
• The rise and roles of neighborhood-based development organizations in renewal efforts, including Community Development Corporations
• Greenways, parks, and environmental planning
• Re-planning planned cities
• Gateway cities: doomed to failure or bright futures?
• Relocation impacts on neighborhoods and families
• University expansion and gentrification

We welcome papers, panels, artwork, short videos, and photo essays on, but not limited to, the topics listed above from community members, community organizations, scholars, practitioners, researchers, funding organizations, middle/high school, and undergraduate/graduate students. Individual and panel presentations welcome.

Note: We endeavor to publish select papers in an edited anthology.

Submission Guidelines

Those intending to participate should:

1. Prepare proposal as an attachment in MS Word or a .pdf (300-350 words)
2. Prepare a brief presenter biography (200 words)
3. Include in the body of the email relevant contact information: the author(s), department(s) and affiliation(s), mailing address(es), email address(es); and phone number(s).
4. Email proposal, bio, and contact information to Susan Grabski at director@lawrencehistory.org by December 4, 2015.

Deadlines

Friday, December 4, 2015 – Proposals/presenter bio(s) to director@lawrencehistory.org
Friday, January 22, 2016 – Successful applicants notified
Friday, February 16, 2016 – Applicants to confirm their participation
Friday, March 18, 2016 – Submission of draft papers/presentations due

Questions? Please visit http://www.lawrencehistory.org/education/symposium/2016 or contact:

Susan Grabski, Executive Director
Lawrence History Center
6 Essex Street
Lawrence, Massachusetts 01840
tel. 978.686.9230
e-mail: director@lawrencehistory.org

Professor Robert Forrant
Department of History
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Lowell, Massachusetts 01854
tel. 978.934.2904
e-mail: robert_forrant@uml.edu