



Michelle Albert of One Stop Music Inc.

Choosing Between Project Planning or Urban Husbandry

By ROBERTA GRATZ FOR THE PORTLAND

Under Project Planning, a project must be big to be meaningful. Big projects require big, experienced developers, big contractors, big government agencies, big public financial support, and lots of investment banking and legal fees. Under this Project-based Planning, the new is added at a large enough scale to overwhelm and alter what exists. What exists may be wiped out entirely, as with urban renewal. Something radically replaces it. Few clues are left as to what has been lost and what alternative strategy has been used.

Project Planners dominate the citadels of power. Planning professionals, developers, Wall Street investors, and the like consider Project Planning the only approach worth talking about, the only one requiring complicated financial packages. Only Project Planning, of course, is dependent on them. Project Planners dismiss anything else as irrelevant, anything that places more

confidence in the judgment of citizen users. Downtowns are pockmarked with their accomplishments. Only Project Planners, their followers, and the pub-

stead of replacing them. Planning is meant to be about problem solving, relying heavily on the expertise of citizen users, the accumulated experience and wisdom of the community. Building on resources to diminish or overcome problems is the chosen route, instead of projects that obliterate those worthy resources. Urban Husbanders advocate introducing change incrementally and monitoring it carefully, providing a great opportunity to learn from each step.

Proponents of Urban Husbandry strengthen what exists before adding anything new. They involve many entrepreneurs of various sizes, not just one big developer. Urban Husbanders rely only on modest doses of government support, if any. Urban Husbanders are the most frequent opponents of Project Planners. They work to add a layer of organic urban growth, rather than replace what has taken decades to grow. This layer may look and feel in many ways radically different from what was there before but, fundamentally, the connection between be-



Diana McKnight owner of Diana's Fashion Boutique

lic persuaded by their rhetoric define these downtowns as reborn. *Rebuilt, yes; reborn, hardly.*

Urban Husbanders assume that assets are already in place to be reinvigorated and built onto in order to stimulate a place-based



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