THE ROLES OF AN INSTITUTE OF A TEMPORARY PLANNING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT: A strategy of temporary use provides an opportunity for obtaining new ideas in the process of testing different concepts of permanence. It enables municipalities and other authorities to experiment with various approaches to abandoned areas, vacant plots and unused buildings. The proposal of the paper is to define the main roles of an independent institution which serves as a mediator among all the parties involved in the process of temporary use - owners of premises, potential temporary users and the neighbouring community. The research analyses case studies of the most significant temporary planning institutes in Europe and summarises the general principles of a temporary planning institute. Municipalities working with a proposed temporary planning institute possess a number of tools for the implementation of legible procedures of temporary use in the process of activation of neglected areas.

KEY WORDS: Temporary, vacant, abandoned, planning, bottom-up, participatory

Introduction
A strategy of temporary use provides an opportunity for obtaining new ideas for development of an area and for testing various concepts in a framework of small pilot projects. A testing process activates an abandoned area for a definite period of time with a limited financial budget. It enables economic growth of premises without special demands for new construction; it recycles existing buildings and becomes a catalyst for more permanent interventions and investments. However, this is not a universal solution; there exists a specific legal framework and other restrictions that
clearly define the limits of a given location. (Eutropian 2015)

In spatial planning policies the term *temporary use* appears in the sense of a strategic approach to the development of a city, especially in the context of regeneration and restoration of given localities. Municipalities are starting to promote the principle of temporary use in a context of local planning as one of the fundamental planning tools. They aim to involve innovative approaches in the process of temporary use of unused urban spaces within a more general urban regeneration strategy. Therefore vacant urban spaces become more accessible for social and cultural experimentation by introducing a more flexible way of city planning. However, it is vital to implement the term of temporary use in a legal framework of the city administration. Currently, short-term use is allowed for public real estate only in the case of cultural activities. Therefore a legal implementation of the transient principle is necessary for the definition of a process of activation of abandoned areas. (Eutropian 2015)

**A role of a mediator**

A process of activation of unused sites requires the role of a mediator, in this case an independent institution within city administration that supervises the interests of all the parties involved - owners of premises, potential users, local community, etc. The formation of an independent agency depends on the local decision-making framework and political will of representatives of municipalities. The authorities possess a number of tools for implementation of legible procedures of temporary use in the process of activation of neglected areas.

The mediator aims to set up a clear planning scenario using several means, e.g. mapping of unused areas, open calls, organising local support groups, etc. In every locality there is an informal initiative that aims to improve conditions for local residents. These impulses are a valuable source of information for future formal interventions. The task of a *temporary planning institute* is to involve local residents and communities in the transformation process, as well as experts and stakeholders from the private sector, such as potential investors. All these actors form the core of a ‘local support group’ (LSG) (Eutropian 2015). A diverse group is assembled on the basis of a public call and it aims to test new ideas. The non-public part of the group is supplemented by representatives of the local Department of Spatial Planning, along with experts in related areas (architecture, economics, culture, etc.) with regard to the character of a given locality.

**General principles of temporary planning institute (results)**

The paper analyses case studies of the most significant temporary planning institu-
tes in Europe. A list of individual cases is cited in a reference list together with the source of analysed data from final reports and proposals. More and more European municipalities are aware of the important role of temporary use in the process of city renewal and growth. The enlightened ones are trying to create an independent institution within their administration that implements and supervises a temporary way of city planning. The synthesis of the general principles of a temporary planning institute is described below.

Figure 1. Logos of European temporary planning institutes (Source: websites in References)

_The institute_ is part of a Department of Urban Planning. It participates in issues of city development. It manages properties owned by the city but at the same time it
supports properties in the private sector. Its goal is to become a promoter of the idea of temporary use. It shares the principles and advantages of temporary use and conveys acquired experience in the form of training sessions, conferences and excursions. It publishes publications and organises lectures to develop and share knowledge. It promotes the principle of transitional urban planning as an independent tool of urban development.

It functions through an interdisciplinary team of professionals (in architecture, urban planning, economics, culture, sociology, etc.). It works with a wide range of experts and partners, from established organisations to engaged local residents. It creates functioning partnerships at various levels of administration (local, regional, national) as well as in the private sector. It supports a participatory way of planning. It implements a bottom-up approach among the official tools of urban planning.

The institute also establish a database of vacant spaces suitable for temporary use. It actively participates in the search for unused premises in the city, involving the public in the process (open calls, tips and suggestions). It operates a reservation system accessible by public with an up-to-date offer of spaces available for transient function. It analysis the technical conditions of properties and defines a strategy for their ongoing control and maintenance. Larger properties require a site manager who is responsible for maintenance of a building and also understands the needs of tenants and creates an attractive background for temporary activities. It aims to match vacant space with a suitable temporary project. It analyses data collected through social networks, online questionnaires, meetings in person, etc. It directly addresses communities or individuals with an offer of temporary occupation of abandoned spaces. However, pairing is not automatic; part of the matching process is the organisation of open days involving the participation of both owners and potential users. It is necessary to prepare a meeting scenario in advance so that the participants from both parties can understand each other’s expectations.

The institute encourages communication among interested participants of temporary use. It mediates a mutual agreement between the owners of abandoned premises and potential users. It provides consultations before the very start of the project and ensures the implementation of a temporary plan is successful. It cooperates with legal authorities in drawing up a contract and further conditions for the temporary use of abandoned areas. The arrangement specifies the purpose, duration, rent and payment method and obligations to an owner of a building.

The institute aims to develop a system of generalised principles of the process of temporary use including standards of agreement among all participants of transient acti-
vities. It systematically supervises progress by monitoring and evaluating the process of temporary use. It creates a feedback mechanism for regular revision and possible adjustments of the current strategy. Moreover, it documents all projects and promotes successful ones.

The institute strives for a diverse way of financing its activities, avoiding financial dependence on a single entity. It generates funds for its operation from the local government, public subsidies, donations from charitable foundations, (international) grants and its own income generated by various activities (conferences, training, etc.). The goal of financing individual projects is a joint agreement between the property owner and the temporary user without the use of subsidies or investment in the premises themselves. Last but not least, the institution defines its autonomy from political and financial deflections.

Conclusions

The examples of European institutes of temporary planning share the same general characteristic and they have proved very successful in the years of their operation. The main principles define a participatory way of planning, interaction between citizens, initiatives and political structure. A broad and open framework is the key to its success. The individual cases of vacant premises are evaluated independently of the political environment and decisions follow pre-defined criteria. The institute makes adjustments based on the evaluation of ongoing projects, and requests feedback from their users.

This kind of institution is proving essential in the functional structure of cities of the future. It fills the missing part in a functioning decision-making city planning structure. It is the link between property owners, legislative regulations of municipalities and state, and users who are desperately looking for a suitable cost-effective space for their activities. It plays an important role in the process of activation and revitalisation of vacant premises. In order to preserve a compact structure, the establishment of an institute of temporary use has proved necessary. Abandoned areas form an irreplaceable part in urban structure and the prime objective of city representatives to promote compact cities of the future.

References

Case studies

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- Communa (Brussel) https://communa.be/notre-mission/
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