



BOOK CITY ★Roanoke

Notes for

Dar Williams'

*What I Found in a Thousand Towns*

**POSITIVE PROXIMITY:** Living in close quarters doesn't have to result in conflict and loss of privacy. A community can use proximity to its advantage to integrate the talents and skills of residents. We have it 'positive proximity' in Roanoke and can strengthen it.

"First: there are **SPACES**, indoors and out, that naturally maximize the number of good interactions in a town. Generally these spaces have some individual character while still being open enough to accommodate the desires and interests of good citizens."

#### CHAPTER FOUR! History

- ★ Identity-building projects are by nature more proximally oriented than partisan divided.
- ★ On Phoenixville: "They walked into these historic buildings and brought back elements of the town's past as a way to define its unique identity, spark imaginations, inspire community involvement and bring people in from the Schuylkill watershed and beyond. History projects have boosted morale and kept everyone involved."
- ★ Passionate, tenacious individuals drive projects.
- ★ Quirky, specific projects project community character: The Blob with fleeing audience reenactment, Cult night.
- ★ How do independent stores support local identity? Can support for local independents override risk of chain stores?
- ★ Can support for multiple histories foster inclusion?
- ★ American towns can be very self-segregating." How might we counter this?
  - ★ Senior centers in the heart of town.
  - ★ Philly Fadez Barber Shop at the heart of town.
  - ★ Dover's 'stumble upon' history interpretations.
- ★ What signs of history do we find in Roanoke?
- ★ What does our history say about us as a people—as a community—today?

"Second, there are **PROJECTS** that build a town's **IDENTITY**—socially, culturally, and /or historically—helping them become...themselves. These projects bring out the advantages of proximity by attracting the passions and skill sets of people who are like-minded in some ways but very different in others, cross-pollinating abilities and personalities. Citizens tend to see past their partisanship and biases when they're trying to accomplish something they can't do alone..."

"Third...**TRANSLATION** is all of the acts of communication that open up a town to itself and the world...the ability of a place to incorporate every willing citizen's contributions, and in so doing, find ways to make life more interesting, welcome the outside world, and provide stability for those who need support."

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NEXT Session: Chapter 5 - **Culture**

**Aurora Studio Center** – 110 Campbell Ave. SW

Monday, **November 6** – 6:30 gather, 7 PM conversation

