Urban Agriculture Conference : Appropriate Technology for Urban Agriculture
Gary Wozniak, Recovery Park Detroit

1. Narratives / Chapter (3- 5 themes)

Recovery Park Presentation:

a) **Demographics:** Decreasing population, want to increase quality of life, grow produce and sell to restaurants. Indoor growing provides 5.2 jobs per acre, plus processing equals 18 jobs per acre. Recovering addicts, unemployed, prisoner re-entry, homelessness are targets to employment. Grew out of a pilot project called Share House – recovery home.
b) **Economics:** Annual sales of 29 million dollars. 105 acres of land used for the Recovery Park. Grow specialty produce, create a product (i.e. salad mix), and sell to restaurants.
c) **Technology:** water harvesting project (divert stormwater to filter and use for washrooms, grass, gardens etc). Ozonation to clean product, nano-sensor technology to determine plant health or disease, DTE energy/gas, power grid companies, lighting experiments (LED lighting), High tunnel located in hazardous location (former auto, rail track manufacturer), green houses (3 acre glass) to grow 3 complimentary products controlled by computers and nano-technology. High pressure sodium lights with plants on roller systems to move through different stages of growing (different climates). Great lakes restoration initiative: curbs are slopped to run water into rocks (cistern) diverted into its distribution system. Incineration of wastes creates steam that can be utilized for heating and cooling systems.
d)

2. Personal Stories (direct quotes)
   a) Recovery Park Presentation: Recovered addict, was in the prison system, growing produce is non-judgemental, focus on this priority population for employment.

3. Big / unanswered questions
   a) Discussion: micro versus macro producing, how do we keep our food systems at economies of scale?

4. Recorder's notes
   a) Recovery Park Presentation: sustainability (efficient use of resources), low carbon foot print, technology, diversity of products, addresses multiple social issues.

Summarized themes:

Role of technology and balance of natural approaches such as reuse of water and efficient designs.

Connection to the elements: the soil, growing of produce, connection to nature, connection and ownership of people and plants.

Urban agricultural spaces: availability of land, local connections to consumers and partners, Recovery park's urban environment – access to food and employment.

Smart economics: That there are ways to be smart about costs and savings.

Questions:

1) What are simple forms of equipment that can be shared within the community?

Gary – we manufacture our own compost tumblers (hand operated) and use it to teach people how compost is made, we also have hand tools and rototillers are made available for others to use.

2) Are you using fertilizers, and how are you helping the soil health, how are you dealing with pests?

Gary – Import compost with main ingredient of cow manure, we have a soil based farmer that has organic growing techniques. For pests, we use soap based insecticides, sticky strips, screens, want to encourage pollinators (bumble bees).

3) Why is your project located in the central part of Detroit?

Availability of land with built-in infrastructure and available labour force. Using an urban environment versus rural provides greater access for employment and selling to restaurants.

4) Role of technology as incorporated in the project, is there a role in teaching or re-training employees?

Use of the technology – yes. Development of the technology is a partnership with other businesses. Yes it a training and business opportunity.

5) Non-profit vs for profit at the recovery park- are you heading toward all for-profit?

Recovery park is not for profit to provide employment to those who have barriers to employment. Each business we create have employees with challenges, such as housing, mental health services, literacy services, support services etc., is covered by the non-profit and other social services in the city. Want to get the government out of the way because these funds come with restrictions to employee treatment options.

Have you had any experience with bio char or soil pollutants? Have you tried vermacultures?

Charing – no clue what that is, however we have problems with spider monkey aphids (?). The soil has higher levels of lead, arsenic, due to the industries. We don't have soil based growing. There are incinerators and hazardous waste disposal sites near-by that are closely monitored by EPA. Are taking precautions in the form of a larger barriers (staggered telephone poles).