

Small Enterprise / Urban Ag Subcommittee
Homegrown Minneapolis
February 5, 2009 -- 3p.m.
Common Roots Café

Meeting Notes:

- I. Introductions and announcement of Cara Letofsky as co-chair of the subcommittee

- II. **Grover Jones, Northside Economic Opportunities Network (NEON) – presentation on development of small enterprises**
 - Among NEON’s partners are:
 - Neighborhood Development Center: business technical assistance, website development, business card printing, training
 - Metro Consortium: will help put together lenders, some business A
 - Emerge: youth entrepreneurial training, workforce training
 - LISC
 - West Broadway Business and Area Coalition
 - SCORE: business seminars
 - North Regional Library: free workshops 4x per month, TA on marketing, website development, and legal issues
 - Four main issues for small enterprises:
 - Capitalization—40% of new businesses fail, with capital constraints being a major cause
 - Good business plan/model
 - Management
 - Marketing and Sales
 - Key success factors:
 - Must be clear goals, clear lines of authority and participation
 - Viability and sustainability— can you actually run it as a business?
 - Appropriate organizational/legal structure
 - Product that is priced realistically given market conditions, etc.

- III. **Paula Westmoreland, Permaculture Research Institute (PRI) – presentation on development of the new Backyard Harvest program**
 - Backyard Harvest, started developing 6-8 months ago with the aim of contracting with homeowners to have farmers grow food in their backyards
 - Initial goals: living wage for farmers (\$13-15 per hour), diversity of foods, neighborhood based food system, restore connection between people and land. Now aiming for \$10/hr through subcontracts with farmers
 - Starting with medium-income neighborhoods, preferably clustered together to reduce drive time
 - Assume 20-week season, 2 hours per week of farmer’s time on each garden
 - 60 applications from prospective farmers, looking to work with 30 homeowners in three neighborhoods in this pilot year
 - Somewhat akin to a CSA model in the sense that farmers and landowners both have a stake in the relationship
 - PRI will train and incubate farmers, provide mentor, liability insurance, etc
 - Homeowner owns the product grown in their yard but PRI will encourage them to share with their neighbors or donate 10% to food shelf

- Some folks want to donate their backyard, some want to sponsor a garden in another yard and share produce
- Market doesn't seem to be there for farmers to make a living off this quite yet
- Value-added infrastructure needed, processing facilities
- Perennial fruits are higher value and more desired but they require multi-year contracts with homeowners
- Low-income neighborhoods and inner-ring suburbs could be part of next phase

IV. Karin Berkholtz from CPED: Crash course on City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department

CPED has three departments:

- **Housing**
 - Three units—Single family housing, multifamily housing, real estate development (acquires property and sells)
- **Economic development**
 - Three divisions—business finance, business development and employment training/retraining
- **Planning**

Has four teams:

- Zoning
- Development services
- Heritage preservation and design (newest team, created in 2004)
- Long-range/community planning
- Planning teams interface with regional partners—Hennepin County, St. Paul, Metropolitan council

CPED activities include:

- Comprehensive Plan for Sustainable Growth: Guides overall growth in the city.
- CPED promotes retaining and growing businesses
- STEP-UP program provide employment opportunities for youth

Next Subcommittee Meeting: Monday, March 2 at 3:00 – 4:30 at Common Roots

**Small Enterprise / Urban Ag Subcommittee
Homegrown Minneapolis
January 22, 2009 -- 3p.m.
Common Roots Cafe**

Meeting Notes:

- I. Introductions**
- II. Revisit subcommittee's role and timetable**
- III. What would a vision for small enterprise urban ag in Minneapolis look like?**
 - Business creation
 - Business incubation and training for farmers
 - Return money and nutritional value to the community
 - Year-round, city-grown food
 - Reflective of the community (farmers, buyers, etc.)
 - Effective business plans
 - Living wage for farmers
 - Access to growing space on land and roofs
 - Connection between for-profits and non-profits to create financial sustainability for these ventures
 - Ways to market the food being grown
 - Diversity of models and scales
 - Raise new farmers "from kids to career"
 - Sales to institutions
 - Technical assistance
 - Pathways for new farmers
 - Healthier food in neighborhoods
 - Clear, measurable goals (reality check)
 - Network of folks working collaboratively
 - Insurance (health and liability), financial support
 - Aggregation, distribution, and processing capacity at the neighborhood level
 - Policy change regarding land access
 - Links between urban and rural production and knowledge
 - Independence and security
 - Connect farmers with markets for their product
 - Education about sustainability for producers and consumers
 - Racial, gender and income equity at the heart of the initiative

IV. What community assets do we now have in place?

- Interested consumers and co-ops with the potential for more
- Agricultural heritage and knowledge
- UMN and Extension
- Robust non-profit sector
- Youth who want meaningful work
- Vacant land, parks, rooftops
- Climate, with enough water and good soil
- Source of compost
- Interest in employee health/eating
- Big food companies and distributors
- Mayor and other decision makers who are paying attention
- Financial resources in the community
- Current economic situation could be a driver for innovation
- New immigrant farmers
- Interest from kids and college students
- Cooperative spirit in the community
- Farm Beginnings and others ag training programs
- Drive for green jobs, climate, energy concerns, transportation
- Interest in food ethics
- People's desire to engage

V. Next Steps

- Everyone submit a one paragraph description of how you/your organization's work relates to urban agriculture / what capacities you bring to this issue
- IATP to prepare and distribute a comparison of the vision and assets above and identify gaps
- IATP to schedule meeting for late February / early March
- Paula and Grover prepare to lead presentation/discussion of enterprise development issues at February 5 meeting

Follow-up Meeting: *Thursday, Feb 5 at 3pm, Common Roots*