

**26th and Kostner Oversight Council
Community Meeting
Central States SER
Monday, April 13
6 – 8 pm**

Present: Jose Vargas, Elena Duran, Daniel C., Guadalupe Tapia, Michael Torres, Enrique Torres, Rafael Abrego, Hugo Antunez, Jackie Serrato, Salvador Prieto, Carmen Prieto, Francisco Espinoza

Facilitators: Adrian Esquivel and Simone Alexander (Enlace)

Notes:

We sent an updated CBA and clarifying notes to Unilever – we have not yet received a response. Unilever met with the Alderman, told us that he would communicate what they discussed, but we have not heard from him either.

Discussion of updated CBA

- There will be an inner road for trucks to access 31st, so they should never be on residential streets.
- Buffer should include trees and fencing that captures truck emissions.
- Buffer should reduce noise pollution. What about extra mufflers for trucks – resident on Kilbourn shared that the trucks are not noisy, the noise at night is from loading and unloading, and the beeping when they back up. With the expansion, most of this kind of activity should happen close to 26th and near the train tracks.
- Remediating the site makes it easier for us to build on it, etc., which is in Unilever’s best interest. It will also be easier for them to do since they are doing it for the rest of the site – 3 acres of a total 24 acres. The site, based on environmental studies, is not contaminated or “dirty” but has “geotechnical issues” – a building foundation needs to be removed.
- What is their current production of contamination? Can we do a study from a third party or from the EPA? What about a study from OSHA?
- Benefits for residents living next to development of the site: fewer rats, snakes, dust.
- This will create jobs, but how many of them will be for residents? The worry is that residents won’t qualify. We are working to set up a system for recruiting, training, preparing and referring local residents through organizations that do manufacturing training and workforce development, like SER and Erie House. The idea is to make sure applications are as prepared as possible. How do we ensure that these organizations refer local candidates? Is it fair to only refer local candidates? Many Little Village residents depend on jobs in other communities.
- What happens to the Parade? Where do they stop?

- What about prevailing wage for construction? How will this interact with the local unions?
- How do we make it clear that doing all of this is in the benefit of Unilever – It's good PR to work directly with the community, reduce emissions.

Use the legal system to pressure Unilever to protect private property. When should we put legal to pressure for noise-reducing windows? Before or after the expansion, if it happens? We can also organize class action lawsuits for noise pollution and damage to houses.

What is the priority/non-negotiable: must limit negative impacts on the environment and the community.

What have we not reached compromise about? Truck emissions and remediation of donated land. Need to agree on language about employment and about the buffer zone.

Many of the residents present thought it would be a shame if this didn't move forward even though they have their concerns, some thought there were more potential drawbacks than benefits, and no one felt that this project is one that should not happen at all. All felt that it important for Unilever to compromise with the community, and begin to develop more of a relationship with community members as neighbors. Many mentioned their involvement in community organizing efforts to hold businesses accountable and are committed to continuously holding Unilever accountable regardless of how this moves forward.

Next step: see if there is a response from the Alderman and/or Unilever tomorrow, and decide whether it is necessary to attend the city council meeting and speak out against the project.