

# News-Star / Booster

A Lerner Community Newspaper

## Mell: Peoples Gas eyeing Kimball/Addison

By **PATRICK BUTLER**

**Staff Writer**

Ald. Richard Mell (33rd) said he hopes an arrangement can be worked out so that People's Gas can buy all but 1.9 acres of the International Paper Co.'s 10.5 acres on the southwest corner of Addison Street and Kimball Avenue.

He plans to meet this week with representatives from the city Department of Planning, the paper company, and the utility, which Mell said he wants to consolidate some facilities.

The only problem is that International Paper can get only \$6 to \$8 per square foot for that kind of use, compared with the \$20 per square foot that a residential developer would pay, Mell told his 33rd Ward Advisory Council's Thursday, Aug. 19, meeting at Horner Park field house, 2740 W. Montrose Ave.

One possible solution would be to make the area a tax-increment financing district to grant a developer a tax incentive equaling the difference between the asking price and what the market will bear, Mell said.

But if such a deal can't be worked out, Mell said, "I may just go for rezoning the property (from industrial to) residential." Mell noted that an earlier plan to sell part of the site to the St. Vincent Day Care Center and use the rest for housing was vetoed by Mayor Richard Daley earlier this year.

Turning to another local concern -- corn vendors -- Mell said a final draft of a new food-peddlers licensing ordinance should be ready by the end of this week. The ordinance was developed during meetings between Chicago Health Commissioner Sister Sheila Lyne, vendor representatives, local community leaders and the 47th Ward office.

It may be too late for the measure to become law this summer since the new version would first have to go through the City Council license committee before being voted on by the full council, Mell said.

"That wouldn't be until October, at least," he said.

Mell said the vendor ordinance was the result of many complaints about corncobs littering the neighborhood and health concerns, but he conceded at last week's meeting that "we couldn't find proof of anyone getting sick" from the corn, which is covered with unrefrigerated mayonnaise or cheese.

When asked if the 33rd Ward couldn't just prohibit corn vendors as has already been done in the neighboring 47th Ward, Advisory Council Chairman Harriet O'Donnell said a council vote was taken on that issue some months ago "and it was my understanding that's not what we wanted to do."

While the council could always revisit the question, she said, "Remember, in the 47th Ward, nothing is allowed. No ice-cream sellers. Nothing."

That same evening, the council gave a vote of confidence both to O'Donnell and to open meetings when it vetoed a proposal to allow only ward residents to attend and speak at Advisory Council meetings.

O'Donnell said the suggestion to close future meetings to outsiders was made after last month's meeting was briefly disrupted by a group of corn vendors and their supporters, who oppose

Mell's licensing efforts, even though Mell has repeatedly said he isn't trying to put the peddlers out of business, "just make them legal."

Many speakers, including Ed Korczynski, who identified himself as a 33rd Ward Democratic precinct captain, urged closing future meetings "for the good of the ward," noting that nonresidents can always talk to the alderman at his office.

Others, however, said the Advisory Council should be able to live with dissent, even from occasional outsiders.

"We may be sick of hearing from corn vendors and bike riders, but that's what this council is all about," one man argued. "This isn't the 16th century. This is America."

**Comments, compliments or complaints about this story?**

**[News-Star/Booster](#) | [About Us/Local Newspapers](#) | [In The Loop Homepage](#)**