Notes from Feb 13th Brown Bag meeting on Xcel project and Environmental organizing

What are people hearing from the neighborhood?
- Not lot of mediation taking place
- Not enough fact finding
- Dead silence
- Nobody knows about it
- Location of Longfellow substation is inappropriate
- Too much info; people do not know where to start
- Not exploring alternatives
- Community councils passed resolutions supporting position of the Greenway Coalition
- Lots of anger
- Silence from the Latino community
- EPIC decided to oppose the lines on 26th, insists the lines need to be underground
- Businesses are excited about the project – need better electrical supply
- People are asking “why Phillips again”
- These projects always seem to target poor communities
- Kills possibility to future development in the area that could lead to jobs
- Midtown Phillips wants conservation federal funds to go into the area
- Longfellow people think the project is really ugly
- Xcel is not looking at options

Who are we not hearing from? Who else needs to be at the table?
- Latino community – no outreach or education efforts on the issues
- Somali community – some conservation with a major mosque, but not enough
- Phillips Partners - they have been at some of the meetings, passed a resolution on the issues
- MUID is talking about this issue

What can we do to get more people to the table/get the word out?
- Waite House
- Phillips Energy Co-op newsletter bilingual
- Conversations with businesses on Lake and in the Global Market
- Have neighbors meet with businesses
- Talk to your neighbors
- Notices on xcel bills
- Get the packet and survey online at xcel or call Pam Rasmussen for the packet

What do people think about the project? What do people know?
- They need to look at permanent lode shifting for businesses
- Should look at smart grid and other alternatives
- Incorporate technology and create jobs
• There are questions about the need for the power – xcel will not do the needs assessment
• Peddle power in homes
• There are issues with the power: Allina power outages, Midtown Global Market had power go out for 24 hours, YWCA power outages
• Clearly there is an issue, but why should this neighborhood bear the burden
• The issues are the result of years of neglect – old wires, old transformers
• Jobs are important to the community
• Efficiency of houses is an unaddressed issue
• Accountability of businesses and individuals for conservation
• Need money invested in energy efficiency and in conservation in the Phillips neighborhood

How can the community drive the process?
• Need to intervene in PUC process
• It is a state process – call on legislators to do something
• The PUC is weak and has no teeth
• Xcel has a preferred option but they are also including other options in their application, which means the PUC process will be at least a year
• Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority has standing in this issue and is concerned
• What partnership with xcel on public meeting not “pony show”
• Reach local politicians on this issue
• Change law to look at density of population where lines are rather than just the length of the lines
• Recognize all this is connected
• Climate crisis coalition call for local production of clean energy
• Work with politicians to change the law
• Get people involved
• Be proactive to change the thinking of xcel to plan ahead
• Need to go on the offensive – there are 27,000 people in Phillips and we need to work together
• Need to insist that neighborhood groups are a part of the process
• Need to get people involved who understand the technology
• Work with xcel to push smart grid
• Pressure city council candidates
• Organize now before xcel submits to the PUC
• Recruit businesses – educate them on the alternatives
• Put the planet before profits
• Institutions have been planning for a long time – why such urgency now?
• Carol Overland article “transmission lies”
• Push for public access to information on power usage by large institutions
• Chose a specific issue to push for
• Look at Energy Harvest Group = solar proposal
• Form advisory group on law proposals
• Contact the PUC
• Petition the PUC to include a citizen task force
• Solar
• Express public outrage
• Do an action downtown

Lessons for others working on environmental issues
• Community has to benefit from projects (jobs, quality of life)
• Green jobs
• Neighborhood needs to work together
• Neighborhoods need to work with each other
• Exercise the power
• Work together

Upcoming events
• Tuesday, February 17th, Town Hall Forum on Green Jobs
• Friday, February 20th, 3:00 at the NELC, planning an action, next steps, letter writing campaign
• Saturday, February 21st, 10-12, Matthew’s Park Building, City Council Candidate Forum, wards 2, 9, and 12
• Wednesday, Feb. 25 11:00a.m. “Truth to Tell” on KFAI is devoting an hour to the issue
• April 27th, Rally at the Capitol for Green Jobs
• May 2nd – 2009 Arbor Day Event on the site of the proposed power lines