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Sent: Fri 5/13/2011 10:08 PM  
To: Schiller, Lynn  
Cc: Murphy, Michael (Alderman); yes642@yahoo.com  
Subject: letter to CPC regarding Gatlin/Walmart developments

From: Barbara E. Burbey  
6718 W. Fairview Avenue  
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To: Members of the City Plan Commission  
Re: Wal-Mart's intended takeover of the Milwaukee Grocery business

Date: May 13, 2011

I was truly disappointed and rather astonished to read the following in JSOnline on April 26th: "The Common Council's Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee is to review the proposed store at its May 17 meeting. The Department of City Development is recommending the council approve the plan."

As a resident who lives and does business very near this proposed development, I am deeply concerned about Walmart's efforts to shoehorn its way into our local economy. What can you possibly be thinking to support a multinational corporation with an annual \$400 billion in sales (half of which comes from the sale of groceries) to come into Milwaukee and insert their enormous straw down into our local economy so that they may suck profits up and out of our community? Walmart's reputation is widely documented. See the link below to a recent report by Hunter College's Department of Urban Planning, which draws on 50 of those studies, outlining the negative impact of Walmart's economic footprint in communities.

We need to rebuild our local economy by supporting businesses rooted in our local region so that more of the dollars spent in them remain here to circulate in our economy. Walmart imports food from 70 countries. They currently have 35% of the national grocery business and having saturated the rural areas are now set to move into the densely populated urban centers where they will do what they have done in rural areas already-drive all the other retailers out of business. NO ONE, no one can compete with Walmart. There isn't enough creativity on this wide earth that will enable a business to do so. They have enough wealth to operate all of their retail businesses at a loss for up to TEN years. But they don't need to do that for ten years because just a year or two is enough to put everyone else out of business after driving down wages, prices, and sales tax revenue as a result. They are horrible jobs and almost exclusively part-time. And when oil goes up to \$150 or \$170 a barrel and it is no longer profitable for Walmart to serve the US grocery market and they pull out, how will food be distributed? Or will the government subsidize them even more because they are too big to fail and we can't have a broken food distribution system lest there be food riots? How many times must we learn our lesson about "too big"? (Auto industry, banking industry and insert more here) Too many local businesses have already been eaten up by national and multinational chains. The profits leave the community along with the manufacturing jobs that are shipped overseas. They are not the solution but rather the problem.

They are taking advantage of this economic downturn to shoehorn their way into large metropolitan areas. Just say NO. Please take the time to read the report from Hunter College. The facts and statistics are all there.

<http://walmartwatch.org/get-the-facts/wal-marts-economic-footprint-a-literature-review/>

Additionally, a Walmart development (and certainly 13 of them) flies in the face of your stated mission statement on so many levels. What kind of an environmental footprint do you think is represented by importing food into Milwaukee from 70 countries around the globe? How does welcoming Walmart into our city's grocery market "serve the needs of local residents, workers and businesses?"

It is shocking to learn that Walmart with its low wages, no-benefits, tax evading strategies is Wisconsin's largest employer. I was informed of this fact by the Walmart representative who recently addressed our neighborhood meeting regarding the 70th & Main Street proposal. This says something about our State and local business leaders. What it says is not kind.

I urge you to take some time to read the studies and to rethink your support of these developments. We don't need any more short-term, short-sighted, ultimately harmful actions in our community with respect to job creation. We need informed business people in our city who will act in ways that serve residents locally and who also understand what is happening on a global level. Economies need to be regional and local. Global economies on the scales created by multinationals over the past 40 years are simply not sustainable on a finite planet with finite natural resources.

The mission of the Department of City Development (DCD) is to improve the quality of life in Milwaukee by guiding and promoting development that creates jobs, builds wealth and strengthens the urban environment, and at the same time respects equity, economy and ecology.

To fulfill this mission we:

- Work with partners throughout the region to ensure an economic climate that stimulates investment and job creation
- Build on the city's competitive advantages, including its built environment, natural setting, diversity and status as a center of commerce and culture
- Encourage high-quality, sustainable development that respects and enhances its context
- Make sound planning and investment decisions which serve the needs of local residents, workers and businesses
- Foster and support business development
- Promote neighborhood economic development
- Ensure processes, reviews and approvals are efficient, consistent and user-friendly

Thank you for taking the time to consider my input.