

There are dark shadows on the earth,
but its lights are stronger in the contrast.

— Charles Dickens

NEWS-STAR

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NEWS OF ROGERS PARK, EDGEWATER, UPTOWN & ANDERSONVILLE

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Mystery grocer seeks new store for Irving Park-Damen intersection



New 'mystery' grocery stores are coming to both Lincoln Ave. and Irving Park and Lawrence and Western avenues. Some speculate that Bob Mariano, the former CEO of Mariano's (now owned by Kroger) is the mystery man as he is creating a new chain of urban-focused grocery stores in Chicago called Dom's Market and Kitchen.

A new 45'-tall, 45,000 square foot grocery store development is being proposed for the intersection of Irving Park Rd. and Damen Ave.

The applicant is seeking an amendment to the Planned Development (PD), which includes the bank building on the corner of Irving Park and Lincoln, as well as the adjoining parking lot on Irving Park and Damen.

They are seeking to build on the parking lot 45,000 square feet of new retail space for a commercial

grocer, as well as a Fifth Third Bank branch and drive-thru.

The development would include 153 parking spaces on-site.

The applicant has not announced the name of the grocer. Because the applicant submitted a formal application with the 47th Ward office, the ward's Zoning Advisory Council [ZAC] will meet with the applicant next week to discuss proposal.

The applicant has refused on multiple occasions to provide certain pieces of information

Is it you Bob?

Bob Mariano, the man who helped create the Mariano's grocery store chain, is opening a new chain of grocery stores in Chicago with the first one slated to open this March at Diversey and Halsted in Lincoln Park.

They may be the mystery suitor for two grocery stores proposed for prominent locations in North Center and Lincoln Square.

Dom's Market and Kitchen will be a small-footprint grocery chain that caters to "busy consumers who want the option to cook at home, take out quality prepared foods, or eat on-site. Consumers can expect pickup, delivery and a differentiated shopping experience," according to their press release.

to the community, specifically regarding the type and operation of the proposed grocery store due to the existence of an Non-Disclosure Agreement.



State Rep. Ann Williams.

Rep. Ann Williams throws hat into the ring for speaker's job

Three Democrats challenge Madigan for leadership post

BY PETER HANCOCK
Capitol News Illinois

House Speaker Michael Madigan announced he would suspend his campaign for House Speaker of the 102nd General Assembly on Monday, but his statement made clear he was not withdrawing from the race. Meanwhile Lakeview resident and State Rep. Ann Williams has officially thrown her hat into the ring to become the next speaker of the Illinois House, making her the third Democrat to announce they were challenging embattled Speaker Michael Madigan.

Williams, 53, a Chicago attorney, released a statement last week hours ahead of a virtual candidates' forum being hosted by the House Democratic Women's Caucus.

"After decades of leadership which has been more about individual power than empowering people, it's time for a strong,

accountable and independent woman to lead. I will lead the House Democratic Caucus collaboratively – with integrity, open communication, and respect for the voices of all Illinoisans," Williams said in the statement. "I have what it takes to take on Mike Madigan and make history by becoming the first woman to lead the House. I have detailed plans, objectives and goals - but my overarching pledge is to lead with integrity, accountability and a spirit of unity."

The House speaker is chosen by House members, and can receive both Republican and Democratic votes. There are 73 Democrats and 45 Republicans who will be seated this year.

She joins Reps. Stephanie Kifowit, of Oswego, and Kathleen Willis, of Addison, in the race for speaker. They, along with Madigan, were scheduled to make their

WILLIAMS see p. 12

Developers circling Lincoln Square, Western Ave. sites now in play

STORY AND PHOTO
BY PETER VON BUOL

Speaking to the members of the Heart of Lincoln Square Assoc. on Jan. 7 via an on-line Zoom meeting, Ald. Andre Vasquez [40th] announced he will be hosting a community meeting on Jan. 28 to discuss the possible redevelopment of the building and parking

lot of what today is a branch of the Fifth Third Bank at the corner of Western and Lawrence avenues.

According to Vasquez, a developer has informed city officials that a national grocery store chain wants to move into the site and would use existing zoning.

With no zoning change necessary, the developer implied there was no need for community input.

The alderman added the developer is different from the one that had approached him a year earlier and which had also proposed a grocery store for the site.

To date, the developer has not provided the community with information including the identity of the tenant, details of its food

PLAZA see p. 12

Shared housing reforms kick-in April 1

In Sept. 2020, the Chicago City Council passed an ordinance that reforms the regulation of the local Shared Housing industry. As part of this landmark ordinance, a series of new regulatory measures will come into effect on April 1 that the city hopes will ensure public safety and accountability within the industry.

Shared housing is available in every North Side community, and there have been several troubling incidents in the last year, including shootings and drug dealing in Old Town and Lincoln Park and prostitution in the Gold Coast. A shooting just occurred on Dec. 10

in Lincoln Park.

Under the new ordinance, owners could face fines ranging between \$5,000 and \$10,000 if their property is used for drug trafficking, prostitution, gang-related activity or a for-profit parties.

Ald. Michele Smith [43rd], whose ward is a magnet for home-sharing, has been a strong advocate for tighter regulations. She says the new laws are not perfect but a compromise she supports. "We have fought hard to put a stop to "party houses," and by unanimous vote, we passed an ordinance further regulating short-term rentals," said Smith in

her ward newsletter.

Smith says that residents will now have the right to ban short-term rentals in their precinct by collecting a petition with 25% of the registered voters. "This ordinance will make it easier for the city to locate, fine and put bad hosts out of business for crimes, illegal parties and overcrowding, while lowering the threshold for revocation for other nuisance conditions." Residents, who live in denser lakefront areas and have complained that they get overrun with summer short-term renters,

REFORMS see p. 12

Environmental group seeking location ideas for new trees in Edgewater neighborhood

The Edgewater Environmental Sustainability Project [EESP] recently received an Openlands Treekeepers tree planting grant and is looking for candidate locations in the neighborhood.

Residents should fill out a candidate location form if they have a viable spot for a tree to be planted on the parkways between the curb and the sidewalk in front of residential buildings, school property, or vacant lots.

The deadline to submit is

Feb. 25.

Anyone who submitted a request for Fall 2020 does not need to re-submit.

EESP is a group of local volunteers who actively partner with neighbors, local schools, block clubs, faith groups and elected officials in order to create a sustainable and environmentally friendly future for current residents succeeding generations. For more information visit sustainedgewater.org/.



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New digger needed to reverse the flow of this river of broken lives, broken dreams



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

From the first moment humans came to live along the shore of Lake Michigan and banks of a river, they were forced to live with one local reality. The river flowed into the lake.

The Potawatomi knew that. The soldiers at Fort Dearborn knew that. The fur trappers staying at Mark Beaubien's tavern knew that. Mayor Long John Wentworth knew that. Even Mrs. Catherine O'Leary knew that. It was an inescapable fact of life.

But as Chicago doubled in population every 10 years in the second half of the 19th century, all those dwellers of America's Second City came to understand that fact of life came with a big price.

The river flowed into the lake. Or let me put it another way: all the sewage and decayed effluvia of Chicago life flowed out into the source of our drinking water.

Didn't mean much when it was only a hundred soldiers or fur trappers. But when the population reached half a million in 1880, and over one million in 1890, surpassing Philadelphia, the crisis was already here.

The actual source of our drinking water's intake wasn't along the shoreline, but rather further out in the deeper waters of the lake.

The intake system, a series of buildings called cribs, did their best to intake fresh water. But it was a losing battle.

This led city leadership to roll up their sleeves to seek a solution.



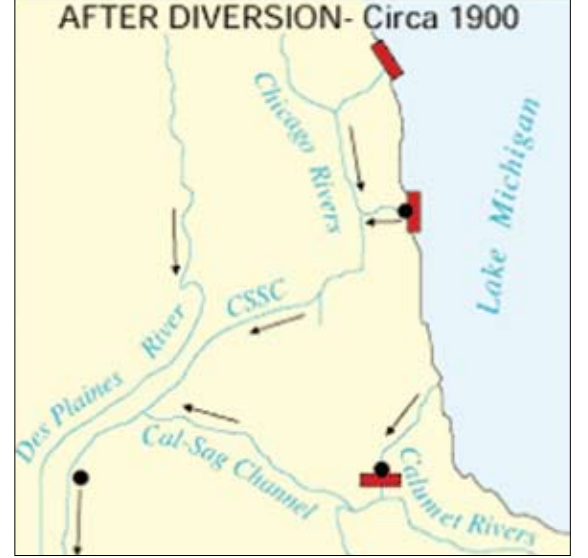
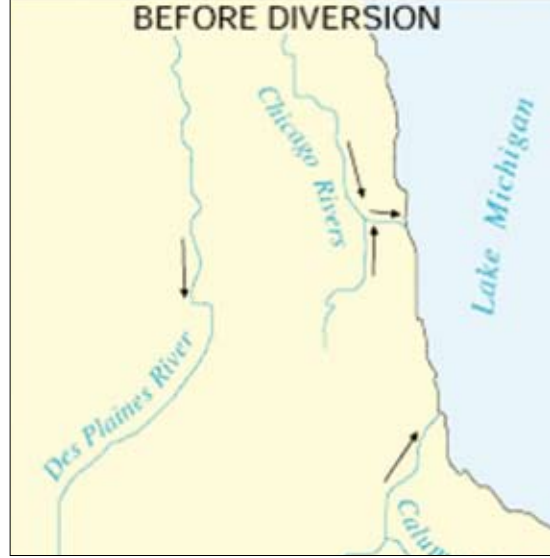
The reversal of the Chicago River on Jan. 1, 1900, was a great way to begin a new century - a clear vision for a fresh modern era. But today, with murder and the mayhem all around us, fresh ideas for the advancement of human health and safety seem to be all used up.

The federal government was queried. The Army Corps of Engineers was brought in to consult, along with local engineers, inventors, architects, water experts, health officials and local politicians, especially our Illinois senators in Washington DC. Their timely solution turned out to be, in fact, quite revolutionary and historic. Never tried before. Reverse the flow of the river, make it flow in the opposite direction. Make it go backwards. They might well have wanted to go to the moon.

It turned out to be the greatest public works project in the nation's history.

The South Branch of the Chicago River was the epicenter of the project's vast engineering trials, experiments and accomplishments. They fiddled with the water tables and gravity by constructing a series of canals that stretched 156 miles.

That's what brought about the formation of the Sanitary District of Chicago in 1885, which we still maintain. Formed to manage and protect the city's water supply and guard its function. Not just a place in which local politicians could dump their unemployed brother-in-law or cousins. The



Sanitary District made plans for the experimental reversal.

Sept. 3, 1892 construction began on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal that ultimately would connect the Chicago River with the Des Plaines River. In the process it forced the river water to alter its course and flow backwards. A wonder of the age. It worked.

It took eight years of digging to bring about the river's reverse with layers from other projects going on to expand the scope and scale of the waterway project. But finally on Jan. 1, 1900, the project directors brought the most essential portion of the project to completion. And on the first day of the new century, they opened the newly constructed channel.

(Well, what they actually did was to rush ahead in the dead of night to prevent any lawsuits being filed in the courts to stop the opening.)

Workers blasted away the last dirt separating the Chicago River from the newly dug canal.

That New Year's Day, nature was secretly, and effectively, forever altered in Chicago as waste matter and sewage was carried away from the drinking waters of Lake Michigan. Down through the Des Plaines River to the Illinois River. Then into the Mississippi River and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico.

Unfortunately, towns and villages on the Illinois prairie also called that same geography home. An eternal antipathy was then set in motion by which Chicago's neighbors needed to be on the alert for the flow of sewage and waste along the shorelines of the newly engineered channels that led south. And brought the unwelcome mess to their downstream doors.

But, as a result of the reversal, Chicago is on record as having the finest water among the nation's large cities. The waters of the lakefront remain pristine and crystal clean to this day. Gives new meaning to the city's motto, "Urbs in Horto," City in a Garden.

Some 120 years later the system of channel waterways remains a symbol of the rapid growth that was Chicago's throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Our world view of ourselves and world fairs boldly celebrated the

city's growth and urban modernity. They remain the creative children of the mathematics and revolutionary science that so transformed the character of this remarkable city.

The reversal was a great way to begin a new century, a fresh modern era. It wouldn't be long before the automobile, the airplane, electricity, the elevator, skyscraper, the telephone, radio and jazz changed the very way people looked at life and each other.

It's always hard to predict how life will be changed by the gadgets and gimmicks of the minds of others more inventive, more insightful, more unrelenting for development. Our Chicago ancestors were certainly plucky and inventive. Nothing stopped them. There was a Prairie resiliency that just kept attracting the inventive and the experimental. Whether it was politics, medicine, livestock, architecture, the arts, education or urban planning, there was energy and invention in the Chicago air.

The reversal of the Chicago River is also a reminder, at the start of a fresh year, of what is in our power yet to achieve as Chicagoans.

Are we really out of creative ideas as we begin 2021? Have all the meaningful plans been used up?

Are there no longer any new perspectives that allow us to see things differently?

With 792 homicides in Chicago last year, are there no new ideas of how to put an end to the murder and the mayhem that is all around us? Sorry Mayor Lightfoot, but what have you been doing?

Chicago Police no longer can pursue suspects by chasing them down the streets. Those who are captured only have to appear in court to be released from captivity, so they can continue their mayhem while awaiting trial.

Thanks States Attorney Kim Foxx.

Just look at the crime reports here in this newspaper, couldn't we try to apply some more expansive reasoning and intelligence to the complicated social conflict of crime in Chicago? The future does not look so healthy if we are to believe the harsh realities of the present. The failure of government to transform attitudes, behavior and nefarious activities

is a moral failure, of course. But it is also a failure of human ability.

Time was that there was no problem Chicago could not solve. But that was before the corrupted self understanding that government unleashed upon our culture. We have been deluded.

How do we reconcile this dead-ended urban existence with the success of local Chicagoans across the nation?

Even today one of the lasting residuals of the reversal of the Chicago River is the heavy machine known as "the Chicago digger." Also known as a dragline, it was invented here by John W. Page (as a partner of the firm Page & Schnable Contracting). It's a huge tractor crane that comes equipped with a monster steam digger instrument attached. That's how we altered the course of the river. A

DIGGER see p. 10

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What grade do you give the CPS reopening?



Heart of the 'Hood

by Felicia Dechter

After 10 long months, the Chicago Public Schools [CPS] opened for pre-k and cluster program kids on Monday. Although parents seem mixed on the plan, the move is definitely not earning CPS good marks among its teachers.

In fact, you'd think whoever made this decision was uneducated to the dangers of a devastating pandemic that continues to spread like wildfire and has killed a couple of million people worldwide.

Published reports say that more than 77,000 CPS kids will return to in-person learning. About 6,000 started Monday and some 71,000 will return Feb. 1. That's a lot of potential corona germs floating around.

Although the Chicago Teachers Union wanted to delay the reopening until it's safer to return and there are better plans in place, here we go. And teachers are being threatened with having

their pay withheld if they don't show up for work.

What a mess. Just like the rest of this city, county, state and country right now.

I have my own concerns for my five-year-old granddaughter, Sydney, who will return to in-person learning Feb. 1. On one hand, I want her to experience all that kindergarten has to offer. The thought of her making new friends and giggling with them in the hallway, or at recess or lunch, warms my heart.

On the other hand, the virus scares me (and what I mentioned above might not even be a possibility if she can't get near others). Selfishly, I want to be able to be with Sydney, but once she is back at school, our visits would probably lessen. The trickle down effect will affect my entire family. But I do agree with my daughter-in-law, Megan, that my granddaughter needs to be around other kids and people.

Parents were given the choice to continue virtual learning or to send their child in-person. Megan chose the latter. She feels safe about sending Sydney back. Her biggest concern has been my husband and I. As cancer survivors, we are both high risk.

"I'm putting my trust into CPS," Megan said. "They put a lot of money into the schools in terms of safety. I personally think



Although Sydney, 5, has a cozy set-up at home, she will return to in-person kindergarten on Feb. 1.

the remote learning is going well for Syd academically, and I do honestly love being able to be a part of the class by overhearing all the kids and all that. That being said, at the same time, a lot of these kids are at a huge, unfair disadvantage and it's starting to show. It's the middle of the year, and I can tell some of these kids are starting to fall behind."

"Syd needs human interaction," said Megan. "It's not fair to her."

Rogers Parker Nancy Najera will also send her seven-year-old daughter back. She considers the

second grader, "to be a very responsible girl who understands the importance of keeping her mask on and hands clean at all times." She said school gives her daughter a more structured, hands-on place to learn.

"She definitely needs more guidance from a teacher and I feel she would be safe," said Najera. "I know that unfortunately not everyone is as responsible but we take that risk even stepping out of our house everyday."

When the planned full reopening happens, Rogers Parker Noah

Stein said he will keep his third grade daughter learning at home. The system-wide plan to reopen "seems counter to the emphasis and deference we've all been asked to give the City Dept. of Health for nearly a full year," said Stein.

"I think that all staff should be vaccinated and honestly that all students should be, too, before schools reopen," said Stein. "If this was the message, then it would bolster the mayor's drive to get the city vaccinated and Chicago residents could unify behind that message."

Teachers give the plan an F

My mom was a 30-year CPS special education teacher. She understood the importance of classroom learning and so do I. I'm also a product of K through 12 at CPS, as are my children. I cherish teachers.

As of Tuesday morning, CPS was locking teachers who didn't show up out of their virtual classes. And just an FYI, school nurses are decrying the opening also.

The following three CPS teachers spoke to me on the condition I would keep them anonymous. One said printing her name would be career "suicide." So I'll call them Teacher 1, Teacher 2 and Teacher 3. Just an FYI, teachers

GRADE see p. 6

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Start making plans for that coach house

Starting May 1, Accessory Dwelling Units [ADU] will be legalized in five areas around the city, increasing access to safe, affordable housing for thousands of Chicagoans.

Under this new program, attics, basements and coach houses will be lawfully permitted in these zones and the Dept. of Housing

will launch a three-year evaluation period to report on ADU activities and make recommendations for a permanent citywide policy.

On the North Side the area covers parts of the West Ridge, Edgewater, Uptown, Lake View, North Center, and Lincoln Square communities.

Chicago real estate tax hikes over the moon since 2000



The Home Front

by Don DeBat

Runaway real estate tax hikes have been a major problem in Chicago and Cook County for decades, especially in tony North Side city neighborhoods.

Property taxes have become a second mortgage that homeowners can never pay off, or an endless expense for a small business that grows more costly each year.

When it comes to property taxes, sticker shock is typical in Illinois. From small-business owners in Chicago to urban dwellers, Chicago property owners are often bewildered as to why they pay the second-highest property taxes in the nation, at an average of more than two-percent of a home's value.

The pace and scale of property-tax growth over the last few decades is overwhelming. Since 1990, residential property taxes have grown 3.3 times faster than the state's median household income.

Residential property taxes now eat up an average of 6.4% of a typical household income in Illinois. In 1990, that share was 3.6%.

For example, a spot check of Cook County Treasurer's records shows "Ma-and-Pa" owners of two four-flat apartment buildings in many North Side communities were hit with tax hikes ranging from 117% to 121% over the past two decades.

Despite annual appeals, a vintage Old Town property's tax bill soared to \$26,284 in 2019 from \$12,091 in 2000, while a Logan Square graystone's bill skyrocketed to \$12,317 from \$5,564.

As shocking as these examples are, they are a drop in the bucket compared with the over-the-moon 1,505% to 2,073% tax increases revealed on four city condominium properties headlining "The Top 50," a new report by Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas.

Here are details on four Chicago properties based on tax-bill increases over the past two decades in the Gold Coast, East



The Mayfair building, 189 E. Lake Shore Dr. has two of the top five highest tax bill increases county-wide over the past 20 years.

Lake View and Wicker Park:

- The owners of a luxury Gold Coast condo at The Mayfair, 189 E. Lake Shore Dr., witnessed their tax bill jump a whopping 2,073% to \$47,782 in 2019 from \$2,199

Residential property taxes now eat up an average of 6.4% of a typical household income in Illinois. In 1990, that share was 3.6%.

in 2000. Records show the owners filed successful appeals over the years to fight the increases. In 2016, the tax bill hit a high of \$59,413.

- The owner of an ultra-luxury Gold Coast condo at 189 E. Lake Shore Dr., saw her tax bill jump a whopping 1,889% to \$133,954 in 2019 from \$6,731 in 2000.

Records show the owner filed successful appeals over the years to fight the increases. In 2008, the tax bill hit \$124,231. An appeal in 2010 lowered the bill to \$105,088. By 2016, the bill skyrocketed to \$165,926. Another appeal lowered the bill to its current level.

- In East Lake View, the owner of a loft condo at 811 W. Aldine saw his tax bill jump a whopping 1,504% to \$8,588 in 2019. The bill rose steadily from \$2,030 in 2005 to \$8,770 in 2014. In 2000, the tax bill for the unit was only \$535.

- The owner of a walk-up condo at 1945 W. Evergreen in Wicker Park saw his tax bill jump a whopping 1,812% to \$9,874 in 2019. The bill rose steadily from \$4,152 in 2003 to \$7,952 in 2016. In 2000, the tax bill for the unit was only \$516.

The Top 50 report represents a new chapter in "The Pappas Study," an unprecedented analysis that shows Cook County's tax bills virtually doubling over 20 years—an increase that is nearly triple the 36% rise in the cost-of-

living index.

"There is a solution to the problem of skyrocketing taxes," Pappas said. "Vote." She noted that less than 29% of the voting-age population in Chicago has cast ballots in elections held since 2011.

"If you don't hold elected officials accountable, then you only have yourself to blame," she said.

Just last November Mayor Lori Lightfoot proposed a budget for the fiscal year starting Jan. 1, that includes a property tax increase of \$93.9 million for a total property tax levy of \$1.6 billion.

When it comes to property taxes, four main factors drive the pinch felt in Illinois pocketbooks: government-worker pensions, government-worker health care, prevailing-wage requirements and workers' compensation costs. None of those factors show any signs of easing in the near future.

Another way to receive property tax relief is to file an appeal. Property owners who think they are over-assessed should appeal now, advises Michael Griffin, an expert tax-assessment lawyer. Visit the assessor's website: www.cookcountyassessor.com, or call 312-443-7550 to find comparable properties or start the appeal process.

The Assessor is now concluding appeals process for 2020. A taxpayer can file with the Cook County Board of Review 312-603-5542 or www.cookcounty-boardofreview.com and later with the Illinois Property Tax Appeals Board 217-785-6076, or www.ptab.illinois.gov. Or, call a good tax lawyer like Michael Griffin at 312-943-1789.

For more housing news, visit www.dondebat.biz. Don DeBat is co-author of "Escaping Condo Jail," the ultimate survival guide for condominium living. Visit www.escapingcondojail.com.

Free online MLK Day celebration

The African American Arts Alliance of Chicago and Black Ensemble Theater [BET] will present the 10th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 18. The online event is free will be available live at aaaachicago.org and www.blackensemble.org.

The annual production will

honor and celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This celebration of the philosophy of Dr. King will feature dance, music, spoken word and excerpts from some of Dr. King's most potent speeches with performances by Black Ensemble Theater Artists André Teamer, Dawn Bless, Dwight Neal and a host of others.

By Jan. 15 we may see easing of lockdown regulations

On Jan 6, Gov. JB Pritzker issued a statement regarding the Coronavirus lockdown restrictions on Chicago and Illinois saying that some of those prohibitions could start being lifted as early as this Friday.

Rules put in place on Nov. 20 barred indoor service at bars and restaurants; put tighter limits on how many people can be inside shops, gyms and other businesses; and closed large institutions, like theaters and museums, among other things.

Gov. Pritzker says that as Illinois' 11 regions try to get control over the spread of COVID-19, then some of the state's restrictions could be peeled back. "I'm cautiously optimistic as there are some early signs that some regions have made real progress and won't reverse that progress," he said in his press release. "Regions will be moved to Tier two or one mitigations, or even possibly Phase four, depending on their individual metrics."

To get to Tier two a region must have a positivity rate of less than 12% for three consecutive days, declining hospitalizations for seven out of the past 10 days and more than 20% of its ICU and hospital beds available. Illinois has seen sharp decreases in its daily new cases and positivity rates.

To watch for any post-holiday bump, city and state health officials will keep an eye on those metrics until Jan. 15, when a full incubation period of 14 days will have passed.

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Four carjackings reported in 2 hours Saturday

BY CWBCHICAGO

Chicago's hard-working carjackers gave police plenty to do Jan. 9. At least four armed vehicular hijackings and attempted hijackings were reported in about two hours. None of the cases immediately appeared to be related.

The flurry of activity began around 6:30 p.m. in Streeterville. A driver told police that an armed man tried to take his Porsche on the fourth floor of a parking garage in the 400 block of E. Illinois. The carjacking failed. Police, including some SWAT units, searched the garage for the gunman, but they came up empty-handed.

Then, around 6:40 p.m., two men displayed a handgun and took a man's white Lexus RS350 in the 1400 block of N. Maplewood. The offenders also scored the victim's wallet and phone, which were in the car.

About a half-hour later, an armed man took a Near North Side resident's 2020 Nissan Altima at gunpoint in the 1100 block of N. Crosby.

Finally, three men armed with two handguns and a rifle took a couple's white 2016 Mercedes in the 700 block of W. Roosevelt. According to the victims, the trio pulled up in a black four-door sedan that had a fourth person driving.

Saturday's final incident bore some similarities to a pattern of hold-ups and carjackings that Chicago police have been warning about over the past four weeks.

Detectives said in a community alert last week that between two and four offenders are approaching victims on the street to demand money and cars at gunpoint. Some of the more recent victims noted that the offenders' weapons included a rifle.

BY DAN CHURNEY
Cook County Record

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot has asked a Cook County judge to toss a lawsuit accusing her of unconstitutionally wielding COVID-19 restrictions against anti-lockdown protesters, but not this summer's massively larger Black Lives Matter [BLM] protests, as the mayor says the anti-racism protests were simply too large to disperse.

On June 29, 2020 in Cook County Court, four Chicago residents sued Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Gov. JB Pritzker, claiming the mayor and governor overstepped their authority through their actions to combat the pandemic, causing economic harm to plaintiffs and violating their rights. The plaintiffs, who include David Sheldon, Omar Garza, William J. Kelly and Kathleen Hanus, want Covid-19 orders from Lightfoot and Pritzker declared void.

They claim Pritzker and Lightfoot breached the state constitution by prohibiting large gatherings. They noted Lightfoot threatened police action against those in Chicago who assemble in large groups. Kelly said he was part of a 150-person anti-lockdown rally, which police broke up

on Lightfoot's orders, citing concerns over the possible spread of Covid-19.

However, when tens of thousands of people took to the streets this summer in support of the BLM movement, not only did Lightfoot not express concerns about the spread of the virus from the protests, she encouraged them, according to the suit.

Kelly maintained Lightfoot dispersed the anti-lockdown protest because she did not like event's message, but agrees with BLM, and so left them alone.

In a mid-December filing, Lightfoot argued her actions were not arbitrary, on the grounds the BLM marches were too massive to shut down.

"It is more feasible to disperse a stationary group of 150 than tens of thousands marching through the streets. Officials may reasonably conclude that dispersing such an immense crowd could lead to disorder, and that police resources are better used in managing the marches, closing streets, and protecting participants and the public," Lightfoot contended. "Kelly offers no facts indicating that his rally was dispersed because of its message."

As far as Pritzker, plaintiffs claimed the Illinois Emergency

Management Agency Act only gives the governor 30 days of emergency power per "disaster," a period that expired April 8.

In a September filing, Pritzker countered the Act does provide 30 days of power, but if the disaster — determined by the governor — lasts longer, the Act also grants the state's chief executive another 30 days, and so on, until the emergency no longer exists, at the governor's determination. Pritzker noted that in the past few months state and federal judges have confirmed this reading of the Act. Pritzker has extended his emergency powers several times since March.

Pritzker pointed out Clay County Circuit Judge Michael McHaney, who ruled July 2 Pritzker exceeded his 30-day authority, is the only judge to rule that way. McHaney's ruling lacked meaningful analysis and should be "ignored," Pritzker said.

Pritzker has been the target of a number of other suits, alleging his shutdown orders amounted to illegal seizures of property without compensation.

Cook County Associate Judge Allen P. Walker is now presiding over the case.

Steel work to block Clark St. this weekend

Construction activity on the Red Line tracks under the Red and Purple Modernization [RPM] will result in street blockages along Clark and Roscoe streets this month.

N. Clark St. between W. School St. and W. Roscoe St. will have continuous around-the-clock work done 7 a.m. Fridays to 5 p.m. Monday Jan. 15 through 18.

RPM work crews will be erecting steel beams as part of the new overpass requiring the parking lane on the west side of N. Clark st. to be closed.

Additional steel work will re-

quire blockages now through Jan. 29 on W. Roscoe St., between N. Clark St. and N. Sheffield Ave. where vehicular and bicycle traffic will be blocked. The parking lanes on both sides of W. Roscoe St. will be closed, as will the sidewalk on the south side of W. Roscoe St.

The sidewalk on the westside of N. Clark St. will be intermittently closed, but access to businesses will remain open.

For more information write to RPM@transitchicago.com or call 331-303-2499.

GRADE from p. 3

not showing up for work, "will be deemed absent without leave and will not be eligible for pay," CPS CEO Janice Jackson said.

Although there are several safeguards and cleanliness protocols in place including social distancing, mask wearing, air purifiers and sanitizers, it's not enough, say the teachers. The three I spoke to all said we're on the cusp of the vaccine, so why not wait a little longer?

Teacher 1 has been with CPS for numerous years and has a daughter that would have started in-person learning Monday. She said the No. 1 thing that helps students learn is consistency and structure. Although she believes CPS and the teachers will keep her child safe from the virus as best they can, she will not send her back for in-person learning.

"I know what school will look like if I were to send her," said Teacher 1. "She will be masked all day, she will not be able to

touch or play with anyone, and she will spend a month learning new procedures in a new environment, which will result in lost learning time."

"I do not want her to feel scared in a new environment, having already been scared having to go into quarantine in March," said Teacher 1. "We abruptly changed how our children learn, and then we are asking them to enter school again, but with many unfamiliar rules. The stress of that kind of environment does not seem conducive to learning. The hygiene standards and the time spent teaching them will result in lost learning time."

Teacher 1 has been working 14 hour days at three remote jobs to pay a babysitter. She formed a bubble with a family friend. Her child is happy, she can hug her friend and babysitter because they all agreed to keep their bubble safe and mask/quarantine when necessary.

"She has adapted well to this routine and sending her back now will damage her mental health," said Teacher 1.

And as a "specials" teacher, Teacher 1 will have to enter five different classrooms per day.

"I worry about contaminating each pod that I enter and I am still thinking about ways to keep

myself and my students safe from room to room," said Teacher 1. "I plan on wearing a KN95 mask each day, goggles, and changing clothes in the closet as soon as I get home."

She said until teachers are vaccinated, CPS should wait to fully reopen schools.

"The disruption to learning that the majority of students have adapted to will result in learning loss for all," said Teacher 1.

"SCARED!" is what Teacher 2 exclaimed in a text when asking to remain anonymous. These folks are afraid of losing their jobs or of other repercussions. Teacher 2 -- who will teach on a computer in a separate room from her students -- called reopening, "The dumbest move ever."

"A lot of parents are saying 'F You we're not sending our kids,'" said Teacher 2. "What would it hurt to wait one more month? The vaccine is here and we will all be vaccinated and they will feel more protected. I think that's fair."

Opening schools won't be safe in any way, said Teacher 3. CPS hasn't thought out all the logistical issues and 'what if' scenarios that teachers face daily, she said. Teachers and educators have shown that this job can be done remotely from March 2020 until now, so why are they being asked

to go back when other professionals, except for health care workers, are not?

"Until they can be in the shoes of a classroom teacher and experience those things, they won't understand why we are reluctant to going back," said Teacher 3.

"School is my happy place and for many students it is too," added Teacher 3. "Lots of students have tough homes and come to school as refuge."

"Students won't be having the same school experience they've had in the past," continued Teacher 3. "They will be glued to their desks, which are not exactly six-feet apart, and have masks on all day. They won't be able to play with their friends, go to the lunchroom and see other kids from other classrooms, play recess like they used to be. They'll be confined to their desks."

Teachers also cannot go near students to console if the student is sad, crying, or mad, said Teacher 3. "How are you supposed to comfort a child from six feet apart?" she asked.

So far, Teacher 3 has been given a small air purifier and a canister of 500 wipes. CPS is providing three cloth masks for every staff and student, a box of disposable masks, and a tub of 500 wipes, she said. There are no desk shields. Water fountains have plastic coverings, so students can't get a drink. "So I guess I'll be bringing in cases of water every week," said Teacher 3.

There has been very little communication from CPS on what they will provide to keep teachers safe, said Teacher 3. "They just tell us to do these trainings and watch videos and that's all," she said. "It's absurd."



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Police reform Bill riles up law enforcement supporters

BY RAYMON TRONCOSO
Capitol News Illinois

The Illinois House of Representatives continued to debate a massive criminal justice omnibus bill Sunday that would transform policing practices in the state.

A 611-page amendment to HB163 would heavily revamp use-of-force guidelines, mandate body cameras for every law enforcement agency, end cash bail, remove some qualified immunity protections, and strip collective bargaining rights relating to discipline from police unions. Further language could be added in a future amendment as well.

The legislation, which is the culmination of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus agenda to end racism, faces opposition from law enforcement groups and Republican lawmakers, some who claim this is an attempt to defund the police.

HB163 started as a Prescription Drug bill with numerous unrelated amendments attached as it moved through committee. Police supporters warn that if this bill passes it may result in massive statewide retirements of law enforcement officers.

"This has been a 400-year-plus journey that we have been on," Rep. Justin Slaughter [27th], a Chicago Democrat who helped craft HB163, said.

"We want to go from protest to progress," he repeated three times with increasing emphasis.

Slaughter chairs the House Criminal Judiciary Committee, which must accept the amendment before it can go to the House floor for a vote. The committee heard testimony and debate on the bill from law enforcement, municipal representation, legal experts and Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul.

Use of force

HB163 would amend the acceptable forms of force by officers, banning chokeholds and restraints that can restrict breathing as well as severely limiting the situations where deadly force is authorized. The reforms were strongly opposed by the law enforcement coalition during the hearing.

Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle, representing the Illinois Sheriff's Assoc., called the proposed reforms "catastrophic" to law enforcement and said they would make policing impossible for officers that have to make split-second decisions.

Crystal Lake Police Chief James Black, who serves as president of the Illinois Assoc. of Chiefs of Police, said he supports reforms to use of force but HB163 is not the answer.

"We do not want to be obstructionist; we want to affect positive change in our communities. But we do not support the bill, the bill will destroy law enforcement's ability to keep communities safe," he said.

When pressed by Slaughter on

what changes to the use-of-force guidelines they would accept, Black and VanVickle did not have an answer, but replied the five days provided in the lame duck session were not enough time for their legal experts to craft alternative measures.

The sentiment was echoed by the ranking Republican on the committee, Rep. Terri Bryant.

"No one is asking this to be slow rolled. Lame duck session is not the time to hash out a 600, now maybe 800, maybe 1,000-page issue on something that is this important," she said. "Too often the Legislature wants to do something even if that's the wrong thing. So let's do the right things and let's do this the right way."

The legislation, which is the culmination of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus agenda to end racism, faces opposition from law enforcement groups and Republican lawmakers, some who claim this is an attempt to defund the police.

Body cameras

Body cameras would be mandatory for all law enforcement agencies under the law. Larger agencies would be required to have cameras in place by Jan. 1, 2022, and all agencies would need to have cameras in place by 2025.

Any municipality or county whose law enforcement agency does not comply would have its Local Government Distributive Fund [LGDF] contributions from the state reduced by 20% each year until it meets the requirements. The LGDF is the portion of state income tax revenue that goes to cities and counties.

Law enforcement groups, including the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police and the Chicago FOP, have referred to the Black Caucus legislation as the "Defund the police bill" because of this provision.

The amendment as written does not provide law enforcement agencies any monetary assistance for acquiring and implementing body cameras. VanVickle and Black both testified their law enforcement agencies would have no issues with body cameras being mandatory if they received fiscal support from the state and the funding penalty for noncompliance was removed.

Collective bargaining

A provision in the amendment would remove the ability of law enforcement unions to collectively bargain with their employers on any issue besides wages and benefits.

Tamara Cummings, general counsel for the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council,

said the measure would make law enforcement "second-class citizens," noting they already have some restrictions on their collective bargaining powers that no other private or public worker union is subject to.

Cummings called the idea that police unions prevent bad cops from being fired "a myth" and testified that only two-percent of discharge cases for officers are appealed to arbitration by unions.

Cole told the committee that the IML supports the measure, and that giving municipalities more power over discipline and termination of officers was a positive reform.

The AFL-CIO, the largest federation of labor unions in the U.S., released a statement saying "We oppose current language in one component of the legislative package that would strip critical collective bargaining rights for union members across Illinois, including for the Black and brown communities that legislators are trying to uplift."

Qualified immunity

In a provision called the "Police Integrity and Accountability Act," HB163 would make police officers personally liable for lawsuits for violating the rights of a person guaranteed under the Illinois Constitution, while explicitly removing qualified immunity as a defense.

Qualified immunity grants government officials and employees immunity from civil suits in the course of their duties.

Law enforcement groups have claimed removing qualified immunity would leave police officers open to frivolous lawsuits. Cummings said it would "eliminate the ability to protect the majority of law enforcement officers who are trying to do a good job."

"They will lose their homes for simple mistakes," she said.

Peter Hanna, legal adviser for the ACLU of Illinois, testified in favor of eliminating qualified immunity, saying opponents of the provision have incorrectly defined what qualified immunity actually does. According to Hanna, officers would still have legal protections, but now victims of police misconduct whose constitutional rights were violated would be able to obtain remedy from the individual officers responsible in civil court.

Opposition to the provision say it would mean absolute liability for officers and could lead to Illinois municipalities losing their insurance that helps pay out settlements for officer misconduct.



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Artis among the first memory care communities to hold C-19 vaccine clinic

Associates, residents and families thankful for long-awaited hope

The last nine months have been a trying time for most everyone, but no group has been affected as greatly as those in Memory Care communities like Artis Senior Living, 3535 N. Ashland Ave., who will be among the first to hold a COVID-19 vaccine clinic for their residents and associates at their community on Jan. 12.

"Today is an exciting day as we take an enormous step in fighting back against this terrible virus that has been controlling our lives for so long," said Don Feltman, Artis Senior Living President and CEO. "Through our renowned partnership with physicians from Johns Hopkins, who are on the frontline of COVID research, we formed the Artis Safety Council which has allowed us to monitor the development of the vaccine and plan for the safest way to get it to our residents and associates."

Two COVID-19 vaccines, produced by Pfizer and Moderna, have now received emergency use authorization by the Food and Drug Admin. The vaccines were developed and tested with tens of thousands participating in the trials. Results show both vaccines to be 94% effective in preventing the novel coronavirus with no serious side effects reported.

With 20 Memory Care Assisted Living communities in operation throughout the U.S., Artis Senior Living is strongly encouraging all of their residents and associates

to get the vaccine as soon as it is available to them. "As a leader in the industry, we are proud to be taking this essential step toward the slow return to normal for our residents, associates and all of their families," Feltman said.

"With this vaccine, we are one step closer to more frequent visits," said Don Feltman.

Artis Senior Living has planned a vaccine clinic for each of their communities for initial vaccine distribution, with follow-up clinics planned for the second required dose a few weeks later.

"At Artis, we spend each day caring for our most vulnerable population and filling their lives with joy, purpose and engagement, but we also know that the limited time they've had with their loved ones in-person has been hard on everyone," said Feltman. "With this vaccine, we are one step closer to more frequent visits, one step closer to hugs, one step closer to the peace-of-mind everyone so desperately needs."

While Feltman has great confidence in the vaccine, he reminds us that Artis will continue to use all safety protocols developed in partnership with physicians from Johns Hopkins and the Artis Safety Council in an effort to provide the safest possible environment for residents and those caring for them.

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Police Beat...

Two carjackings in Rogers Park, another robbery in Lakeview

A robbery and carjacking crew struck at least twice Jan. 7 — once in Lakeview and again in Rogers Park. Two people were taken to a hospital after the offenders crashed a carjacked vehicle moments after the second crime, but no suspects are in custody.

A second carjacking was also reported in Rogers Park Jan. 7, but it is not clear if it is connected to the other crimes.

Around 1:15 p.m., a woman reported that five men who may have been armed took her purse and phone on Belmont Ave. just west of Sheridan Rd. in Lakeview. The offenders then climbed into a white Jeep that bears a license plate beginning with AE68 and sped away, tossing some of her property out of the window as they did.

Then, at 2:27 p.m., a 21-year-old man who stepped out of his car in the 6600 block of N. Damen was pushed to the ground by an offender who then jumped into his vehicle and drove away, a CPD spokesperson said. A witness reported seeing the carjacker get out of a white Jeep before the crime.

The stolen Toyota slammed into another car near Pratt and Ridge, leaving two people in the other vehicle injured, according to CPD. Both victims were taken to St. Francis Hospital for treatment.

Witnesses saw the carjacker get out of the crashed Toyota and run into a nearby alley. The suspect ditched his yellow hoodie as he fled and police evidence technicians recovered it a short time later.

Just before 6 p.m., two men each pulled out handguns and took a man's black 2005 Volvo in the 7700 block of N. Ashland, according to initial information. The offenders got into the victim's car and fled through a nearby alley.

They are described as two Black males in their late teens or early 20's who stand about 5'6" tall. One of them wore a black hat, black sweater, and COVID mask.

Thursday's incidents unfolded just a day after Chicago police warned about a four-man robbery and carjacking crew that has been seen using a white Jeep to commit crimes across the city in recent weeks.

Man reports being abducted in Lincoln Park, robbed, then dumped in Lakeview

Police are investigating after a man said he was abducted on a Lincoln Park street by men who robbed him in their car and then dumped him in Lakeview on Jan. 6.

The 22-year-old told police a red Lexus SUV rolled up next to him on the 2300 block of N. Clark and someone pulled him into the vehicle around 6 p.m.

He said two men choked, punched, beat, and threatened him with a knife inside the car as a third man drove them around the area, according to Officer Ronald Westbrook, a CPD spokesperson. The men demanded the victim's property and took his wallet, cash, keys, headphones, hat, and jewelry before pushing him out of the car on the 3500 block of N. Ravenswood, Westbrook said.

He suffered a swollen eye and a bloody nose. The man said one of

the offenders slashed him across the stomach with a knife, but the blade did not cause any visible injuries.

He was only able to describe one of the offenders, according to Westbrook: A Black male between 18- and 25-years-old who stands 6-feet to 6'-5" tall and weighs 120-150 lbs.

Man charged with robbing Loop restaurant worker during his smoke break

When two men threatened to "blow away" a Loop restaurant worker as they robbed him during his smoke break this week, the victim refused to cooperate and demanded to see the offender's gun, prosecutors said.

He never saw their gun, but he did get punched in the face a couple of times.

On Jan. 6 prosecutors filed charges against one man in connection with the hold-up.

Around 8 p.m. Jan. 4, the 30-year-old victim stepped into an alley in the 700 block of S. Clark to smoke a cigarette behind Half Sour, the restaurant where he works. Two men walked up to him, and Kemaree Vance, 18, sat down next to the alleged victim and bumped him, according to Assistant State's Attorney Jocelyn Schieve.



Kemaree Vance

Vance put an object behind the victim's ear, ordered him to start walking, and threatened to "blow the victim away with his big gun," Schieve said.

But the victim refused and challenged Vance to show him the gun he intended to use, she said. Vance allegedly responded by punching him in the face.

Meanwhile, the other offender noticed the victim was holding a bottle in one hand and told the victim that Vance would shoot him if he tried to use the bottle as a weapon, according to Schieve.

Then, Vance punched the victim in the face again, went through the man's pockets, and took his keys, Schieve said. Both assailants then left the scene.

Police searched the area for people who matched the descriptions given to them by the restaurant worker, and they found Vance nearby. Prosecutors said the victim identified him as the primary offender and specifically recognized Vance's eyes and voice, Schieve said. Cops said Vance had the victim's keys.

Prosecutors charged Vance with aggravated robbery and possession of a controlled substance for 30 benzodiazepine pills that police allegedly found in his possession.

Vance, 18, has no criminal history. Judge Susan Ortiz set his bail at \$10,000 and ordered him to go onto electronic monitoring if he can post a \$1,000 deposit bond to get out of jail.

Employees of other downtown restaurants have reported similar robbery encounters in recent weeks, but Vance is not charged with any of those.

Arrested three times for bike theft in two months

Police arrested Paul Martin three times in two months for allegedly stealing bikes downtown and on the North Side in 2019. Now, prosecutors are giving him a second chance. Or maybe it's a third chance. Possibly a fourth. It's hard to know for sure.

On July 9, 2019, Martin was detained by an off-duty police officer who said he saw Martin try to cut the lock off a bike with bolt cutters in the 300 block of N. Financial Plaza.

Martin was charged with attempt-

Judge sends alleged drunk-driving former alderman to jail



Proco "Joe" Moreno

Former Chicago Ald. Proco "Joe" Moreno, who was charged with driving under the influence after he allegedly crashed into eight cars and a tree on Astor St. in the

Gold Coast Dec. 27, was ordered by a Cook County judge to turn himself in to authorities for violating the terms

of bail bond in another pending case Jan. 7. Moreno was sipping from a red plastic cup during the court hearing, which was conducted via ZOOM due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I hope he's drinking water out of that red cup," Cook County Judge William Hooks said as he ordered Moreno to surrender to jail authorities by mid-afternoon.

Moreno was on bail for an on-going insurance fraud and false report case when he crashed his car into a tree on Division St.

ing to CPD records. In that case, he is accused of pointing a loaded handgun at a victim and robbing them. A judge set his bail at \$5,000 and Brown went home after posting a \$500 deposit bond.

In October, police arrested Brown for felony manufacture-delivery of cannabis, which would violate his bail bond in the armed robbery case. Instead, prosecutors dropped the cannabis case two days later, according to court records.

On Jan. 6 Judge Susana Ortiz ordered Brown held without bail in the carjacking case and ordered him held without bail for violating the terms of bond in the June robbery case.

Both juveniles are charged with possession of a stolen motor vehicle.

Near North Side man charged with First Degree Murder

On Jan. 6, Aray Booth, 25, of the 0-100 block of W. Chicago Ave., has been charged with one Felony Count of First Degree Murder.

Booth was arrested Jan. 4 in Cape Girardeau, MO, after he was identified as the offender who shot and killed a 24-year-old male victim on Dec. 8, 2020 in the 2700 block of W. Harrison. Booth was placed into custody without incident, transported back to Chicago, and charged accordingly.

Armed carjackers strike in Bucktown, West Loop

Armed men hijacked a food delivery driver in Bucktown and then dragged the victim as they drove away with his car Jan. 3, police said. The carjacking came about two hours after armed men took another driver's Mercedes in the West Loop. Here's what we know:

Around 8:20 p.m., a 40-year-old food delivery driver was getting into his parked car when an a man approached him from behind and displayed a handgun in the 1900 block of N. Milwaukee, according to Officer Ronald Westbrook, a CPD spokesperson.

The hijacker got into the victim's red Honda Accord and drove away with the victim still hanging onto the car door. Westbrook said the victim was taken to St. Mary's Hospital in fair condition with injuries to his hands, knees, and rib area.

Police have not located the stolen car, but police license plate readers detected it in traffic near the 3700 block of W. Roosevelt shortly after the carjacking, according to a CPD report.

An officer at the scene said the carjacker is a Black male in his mid-20's who wore black clothing.

Earlier, a group of armed men carjacked a driver of his black 2018 Mercedes sedan near the corner of Madison and Aberdeen in the West Loop. The 29-year-old victim was parking

ed theft and criminal damage to property. But prosecutors dropped that case a few weeks later.

One week after charges were dropped, on Sept. 6, 2019, police arrested Martin at his home to face charges for two more bike thefts.

In one case, Martin allegedly cut the lock from a bike outside the Addison Red Line CTA station and rode away with it while the dismissed theft case was still pending. Police said they used CTA surveillance footage and records of a pawn shop transaction to track him down.

On \$500 bond for armed robbery, now accused of carjacking woman at gunpoint

A Chicago man who paid just \$500 to get out of jail after prosecutors charged him with three counts of armed robbery with a firearm in June was back in bond court Jan. 6 as prosecutors accused him of putting a gun to the head of a 58-year-old woman that he allegedly carjacked.

It's another example of people being charged with violent crimes while on "affordable bail" for other violent cases.

Around 7 p.m. Jan. 4, a woman was backing into a parking space behind her West Side home when Demetrius Brown walked up, stuck a gun through her open driver's side window, and placed the barrel of the firearm to her forehead, prosecutors said.

Brown allegedly ordered the woman out of the car and then drove away with her 2012 Nissan Maxima with two juveniles. Inside the car were the woman's purple winter gloves and her wallet, which contained about \$450 and a couple of \$2 bills.

When police found the woman's car about 45 minutes later, they saw Brown standing behind it. He allegedly bent down, then stood back up as cops approached.

Officers detained Brown, age 20, and the two juveniles who were still inside the car. Police said they found a loaded handgun in the spot where Brown had crouched down moments earlier. And he had a \$2 bill in his pocket, they said.

The victim identified Brown as the man who put a gun to her head. Prosecutors said he wore his COVID mask low on his face, so the woman was able to get a good look at everything above his lips.

When police arrived at the station with Brown, they discovered a purple winter glove in their squad car's back seat. It hadn't been there before Brown was arrested, prosecutors said. The victim identified it as her property.

Prosecutors charged Brown with Class X armed vehicular hijacking.

Back on June 2, prosecutors charged Brown with three counts of armed robbery with a firearm, accord-

ing to CPD records. In that case, he is accused of pointing a loaded handgun at a victim and robbing them. A judge set his bail at \$5,000 and Brown went home after posting a \$500 deposit bond.

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Both juveniles are charged with possession of a stolen motor vehicle.

On Jan. 2, a three-man theft crew stole large amounts of booze and tobacco products from three downtown convenience stores. And, after cops briefly chased them through River North, the team made one more stop in the West Loop to do it again.

Around 3:15 p.m. Friday, two men armed with a handgun took alcohol and tobacco products from the 7-Eleven store at 801 S. State in the Loop, according to a CPD report. They were then seen getting into a blue or black Ford Expedition — the same model that police and witnesses saw the crew use last weekend.

The robbers were a White male who wore a black hoodie with brown pants and a Black male who wore a black hoodie with black pants, according to a witness. Both are in their 30's or 40's and wore medical masks. They were last seen running into a nearby alley and getting into the SUV.

Four stores were targeted by the crew in a couple of hours last Saturday. They first targeted 7-Eleven's store at 201 E. Ohio in Streeterville around 8:45 p.m. Minutes later, they did it again at 645 N. Kingsbury in River North. And at 10:30, they struck the store at 177 N. Wells in the Loop.

Police spotted the Expedition crossing the Chicago River a few minutes after the third incident. Officers pulled the SUV over in River North and approached the vehicle with guns drawn. But the driver sped away again.

He stopped for a few minutes in the West Loop so the crew could raid one more store at 627 W. Jackson, according to a CPD report.

Officers who pulled the SUV over in River North said the driver is a Black male over 50-years-old. He wore a dark stocking cap with a dark coat, an officer said.

Convenience store robberies, which have traditionally netted only small amounts of money, are skyrocketing in Chicago as criminals turn their attention to the stores' high-priced tobacco and liquor inventory. Robberies of convenience stores soared 75% in Chicago last year compared to 2019, according to CPD records.

on the first block of N. Aberdeen with the offenders rolled up in a black SUV at 6:19 p.m., Westbrook said. Two of the carjackers got out of their car and displayed handguns while ordering the victim out of his vehicle.

Westbrook said the offenders ordered the man to turn over his phone and car keys, then drove away with his car. The SUV they arrived in followed them.

According to the victim, the hijackers are three Black males between 17- and 20-years-old who stand 5'-7" to 5'-10" tall. They were dressed in all black clothing. The stolen Mercedes C300 is black and has yellow brake calipers.

Downtown convenience store robbers returned Friday

A group of men who raided four downtown convenience stores for cigarettes and liquor earlier this month has apparently struck again — and they brought a gun this time.

On Jan. 2, a three-man theft crew stole large amounts of booze and tobacco products from three downtown convenience stores. And, after cops briefly chased them through River North, the team made one more stop in the West Loop to do it again.

Around 3:15 p.m. Friday, two men armed with a handgun took alcohol and tobacco products from the 7-Eleven store at 801 S. State in the Loop, according to a CPD report. They were then seen getting into a blue or black Ford Expedition — the same model that police and witnesses saw the crew use last weekend.

The robbers were a White male who wore a black hoodie with brown pants and a Black male who wore a black hoodie with black pants, according to a witness. Both are in their 30's or 40's and wore medical masks. They were last seen running into a nearby alley and getting into the SUV.

Four stores were targeted by the crew in a couple of hours last Saturday. They first targeted 7-Eleven's store at 201 E. Ohio in Streeterville around 8:45 p.m. Minutes later, they did it again at 645 N. Kingsbury in River North. And at 10:30, they struck the store at 177 N. Wells in the Loop.

Police spotted the Expedition crossing the Chicago River a few minutes after the third incident. Officers pulled the SUV over in River North and approached the vehicle with guns drawn. But the driver sped away again.

He stopped for a few minutes in the West Loop so the crew could raid one more store at 627 W. Jackson, according to a CPD report.

Officers who pulled the SUV over in River North said the driver is a Black male over 50-years-old. He wore a dark stocking cap with a dark coat, an officer said.

Convenience store robberies, which have traditionally netted only small amounts of money, are skyrocketing in Chicago as criminals turn their attention to the stores' high-priced tobacco and liquor inventory. Robberies of convenience stores soared 75% in Chicago last year compared to 2019, according to CPD records.

— Compiled by CWBChicago.com

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Access to long-running local police blog suddenly restricted and a lot of people are asking “why?”

A long-running local blog about Chicago policing is no longer visible to the public, and many people want to know what's going on. We know this is true because this reporter's inboxes started filling with questions about Second City Cop's status when their site became restricted Sunday.

You can take this fact to the bank: We have absolutely no idea what's going on. But that's not going to stop this newspaper from reporting on it and speculating.

SCC, as it's sometimes called, has been a daily must-read for anyone who reports on police and crime issues in Chicago or who has an interest in reading about policing — warts and all — from the perspective of authors who claimed to be current and former Chicago police officers.

Let's start with what probably did not happen.

We can speculate with a fair amount of confidence that the site has not been removed from the internet by Google, the company that hosts and operates the blogging platform SCC uses.

As of Sunday evening, visitors to SCC who are logged into a Google account began receiving the following message: “This blog is open to invited readers only.” That apparently means the blog still exists, but the general public doesn't have permission to see it. (Visitors who are not logged into a Google account are asked to sign in. Once they do, they see the “invite” message.)

This blog is open to invited readers only

<http://secondcitycop.blogspot.com/>

It doesn't look like you have been invited to read this blog. If you think this is a mistake, you might want to contact the blog author and request an invitation.

You're signed in as

- Sign in with a different account

As of deadline Tuesday, most visitors to SCC received this message.

This reporter once used the same Google-based platform for our own reporting. Switching a publicly-visible blog to “invited readers only” takes exactly two clicks. Blog operators can also restrict their site so that only its authors have access, but that's not the option being used at SCC.

So, what did happen? Did we mention that we have absolutely no idea? The possibilities range from innocuous to whatever the opposite of innocuous is.

Starting at the low end, somebody screwed up and clicked the wrong settings option, sending their whole site private.

If that's not it, we turn to the assumption that the site operators intentionally made their content “invite only.”

Why? Couldn't tell ya.

Starting at the low end of the Wild Speculation Spectrum: maybe they got tired of writing. The author(s) have been posting for 15 years without any known source of compensation whatsoever. There are no ads or subscriptions.

They're not even getting beer money out of it. In recent years at least, only one or two days have passed with no new content.

And they actually moderate hundreds of internet comments every day. Can you imagine the toll that takes on the human brain? We can. We used to have a comments section.

Maybe they're burnt out.

Then, there's this: SCC has mentioned a couple of times lately that their site might go away. Those references have been tied to the authors' concerns about changing political tides and censorship.

But if Google wanted SCC to go away, the site would almost certainly be gone — completely gone — not just limited to invited parties.

The list of possible reasons for the site's conversion to invite-only status is quite long. And we'll have to wait and see if the authors ever decide to let their readers know what the real reason is.

Charges filed in Uptown road rage attack

Police have tracked down the man that prosecutors say stabbed another driver during a road rage incident in Uptown on Dec. 23. The back window of the alleged victim's car was also shot out during the noontime incident in the 1200 block of W. Winona, police said, but the accused man is not charged with any firearms violations.

Ruben Bunyi, 69, is charged with two felony counts of aggravated battery. Prosecutors on Friday said the 30-year-old victim had undergone three surgeries to repair a seven-inch cut to his leg.

The younger man was driving behind Bunyi near the 5000 block of N. Broadway, but he became frustrated because Bunyi kept slamming on his brakes. Assistant State's Attorney Jocelyn Schieve said during Bunyi's bond court hearing Friday.

When the victim turned onto Winona St., Bunyi pulled up behind him and the two began arguing outside their vehicles, Schieve said. Bunyi punched the younger man several times and the alleged victim kicked Bunyi in self-defense, according to Schieve.

That's when Bunyi allegedly pulled out a knife with a three to four-inch blade and began slashing the man's left calf. As the injured man returned to his car, he heard a gunshot, and the rear window of his car shattered, but

the bullet did not strike him. The victim never saw Bunyi with a gun, Schieve said.

Last month, police said the victim drove himself to Weiss Hospital for treatment and stopped a patrol officer along the way to report the incident. He was later transferred to Stroger Hospital and is still undergoing treatment, according to Schieve.

Bunyi's public defender, Caroline Howard, said he was involved in a “mutual combat situation” with a younger man.

Investigators reviewed CPD surveillance camera footage to

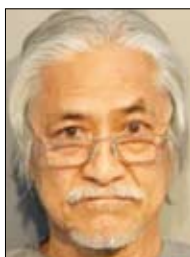
get a partial license plate of the car driving in front of the victim before the attack. Based on that information, the car model, and images of the vehicle's driver, they narrowed their investigation down to Bunyi, Schieve said.

The victim allegedly identified Bunyi as the other driver in a photo array this week.

Schieve told Judge Susana Ortiz that Bunyi is a concealed carry license holder.

The judge said it's “very sad still that people get into it over these road rage type things. Keep driving. Everybody move on. There's really no point.”

She then ordered Bunyi to surrender his firearms, ammunition, and permits to police after he posts a \$1,000 deposit bond to get out of jail.



Ruben Bunyi

All stories on this page compiled by CWBChicago

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Pot luck: 881 pounds of edibles found in North Side storage locker

Chicago police armed with a search warrant found nearly \$500,000 worth of cannabis products, including 881 pounds of infused edibles, in a storage locker on the Near North Side, prosecutors said Jan. 6. Now, the man who allegedly rented the storage space is facing multiple felony charges.

Cops executed the search warrant at Public Storage, 1129 N. Wells, on Dec. 11. And they allegedly found a marijuana motherlode inside the locker that prosecutors said was rented by 41-year-old James Lawson.

Among the items allegedly seized by police: over 880 pounds of cannabis-infused edibles; 66 pounds of cannabis flowers; thousands of pre-rolled joints, and 2,950 cannabis vape cartridges.

The total street value? \$483,200 according to prosecutors.

Lawson has no criminal background. His private defense attorney, Herschel Rush, said authorities had not presented any evidence to show Lawson possessing the contraband or bringing it into or out of the storage facility.

Prosecutors charged Lawson with manufacture-delivery of cannabis and possession of a controlled substance.

Judge Susana Ortiz set his bail at \$50,000. Lawson will need to post a \$5,000 deposit bond and prove that the bond money came from a legitimate source.



James Lawson

Man shot at party inside short-term rental apartment

A 31-year-old man is in good condition after being shot inside a short-term rental apartment in Lincoln Park Dec. 10, police said.

Officers responded to the area of Dayton and Wrightwood to investigate reports of shots fired in the area around 4:30 a.m. The victim soon appeared at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center for treatment of a graze wound above his right buttock, according to CPD. He was in good condition.

Another person who attended the party was taken to St. Joseph's hospital for a minor laceration, according to police, but no further information was available about the individual or their injuries.

Cops eventually found a crime scene including five shell casings, blood splatter, and a live bullet inside the rental unit at 950 W. Wrightwood, according to a CPD report.

Police said some occupants of the apartment were detained, but witnesses have been uncooperative.

Listings for the 3000-square-foot party house claim it can accommodate 16 people in four beds with 2.5 bathrooms for under \$400 per night. Features include

an 80" television, poker table, and a chef's kitchen built around a 12-foot island, according to one listing. There are also “multiple deluxe air mattresses available” and “two plush sofas.”

Ald. Michele Smith [43rd], whose ward includes the scene of Sunday's incident, has spent years fighting for tougher restrictions on short-term rental properties in the city.

Just four months ago, some Lincoln Park residents were “relieved” that the city passed a new ordinance that, among other things, bans one-night apartment rentals in the city, according to CBS2.

“This ordinance is a needed change; for too long, communities have suffered from out of control ‘party houses,’ in my ward and throughout the city,” Smith told the TV station. “Now Chicago residents who want to restrict short term rentals in their community will be able to petition to keep them out of their precinct.”

A spokesperson for Airbnb confirmed that its platform was used to rent accommodations in the Wrightwood building for Saturday night, but they would not confirm if the unit rented is where the shooting took place.



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Buffalo Bob Smith with Howdy Doody.



Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. and Jacqueline.



Happy 100, Drake Hotel.



James and Margaret Kenny.

DIGGER from p. 2

“digger” chewing the earth. Operated by hard workers delighted to move the earth beneath our feet, changing the landscape as we knew it.

We need to once again embrace the heavy labor of work. Hopefully it will change the landscape of Chicago. That’s better than boarding up the windows on Michigan Ave. Or renting semi-trailer refrigerator trucks to chill the dead who fell on Mayor Lightfoot’s watch. Let’s reverse the flow of this river of broken lives and broken dreams. Let’s really make 2021 mean something. Let’s attach our hearts to a dream. The harmony that only intelligence and reason can create. And that dignity and love can restore.

That’s really swimming against the current. But, it’s a reality we can’t live without. We need to invent a new digger.

DRAKE HOTEL AT 100: In my childhood I once believed I had my own high chair at the Drake Hotel, I was there so often. In my opinion the Drake’s cheese rolls alone gave the Drake a gilded history. So too the Gold Coast Room and Afternoon Teas in the Gallery drawing room, the Coq D’Or, The Cape Cod Room and the Camellia House. The cheese salad dressing, legendary. Nothing anywhere in Chicago matches the East Lake Shore Dr. panoramic view of water, sand and elegant architecture. The Drake is Chicago. And that means the wonderful **Shaun Rajah**. Everyone’s favorite. Since the **Drake Brothers** entry onto Michigan Ave., the hotel began a unique relationship with the streetscape and the Gold Coast neighborhood. From **Queen Marie of Romania** to **Diana, Princess of Wales**, the Drake has been a first stop for royalty and meat packers like **Ira Nelson Morris**. I once had breakfast there with IRA leader **Gerry Adams**, and executive-sized cocktails with Chicago’s TV pioneer **Dorsey Connors** in the Coq D’Or. Happy Centennial Drake Hotel.

HOWDY DOODY: Jan. 1, 1947, 74 years ago, **Buffalo Bob Smith** and **Howdy Doody** premiered their first TV show. During the last show, (Sept. 24, 1960) **Clarabell the Clown** talked. It was the first nationally televised American children’s TV show.

Howdy was a puppet.

MATRIMONIALS: Happy 58th Anniversary to **Jacqueline** and **Rev. Jesse Louis Jackson Sr.**, a true blessing for Chicago.

CHICAGO HOMICIDE COUNT: Chicago ends 2020 with 792 homicides. That’s the most since 2016 when there were 808. And 79 Chicago Police Officers were shot in 2020.

QUEERDO GIFT: Out there producer, director and writer **John Waters**, the artist who gave us Hair Spray, Pink Flamingos, Cry Baby, and Polyester has bequeathed his famed art collection to the Baltimore Museum of Art. That’s quite a coup. The bathrooms there will now be named in his honor.

UMBACH ART: A reminder that **Adam Scott Umbach’s** exhibition in Sag Harbor, NY at Roman Fine Arts, 11 Bridge St., is now in full swing until February.

VEGAS ROYALTY: **Phyllis McGuire**, the last of the singing trio, the **McGuire Sisters**, discovered and made famous in the



Adam Umbach

1950s by **Arthur Godfrey** and assorted Las Vegas mobsters, died at 89. Hard to imagine their vast popularity today. **Christine, Dorothy** and **Phyllis McGuire** sang for five U.S. presidents and **Queen Elizabeth II**. They were often compared to the **Andrew Sisters**.

WHO’S WHERE: **Jim Kinney** and **Brian White** looking regal for New Year’s Eve and the grand hoopla at the Yacht Club with lovely **Peggy Snorf**... **Sherry Lea Fox** has a new sombrero and is in high style in Mexico at Las Ventanas al Paraiso, Cabo San Lucas... **Ikram Goldman**, Papa **Josh Goldman** and the **Samurai Brothers** have to be the best dressed family in the snowy

outdoors of Buchanan, MI... tribal elder **Shelley Howard** holding up his New Year’s tradition at a Carmines’ dinner with famed DJ, **Robert Murphy** and **Cheryl Larsen**... **Karin Carlson** with **James Nordlie** in sunny Naples, FL... **Irene Michaels** has a Rocky Mountain high in Aspen,



Lori Allen, Stanley Paul and Leah Chavie.

CO, strumming her guitar... Wilmette’s **Dan** and **Laurie Baker Lawlor** in Lake Geneva at the Polar Plunge, brrrrr... **D. Graham Kostic** leading the singalong and **Fran Taglia** on the piano with **Robbie Burn’s** Auld Lang Syne and doing a really nice job... **Judy Nugent** making public her excellent reading list for 2021... **Fred** and **Judge Rhoda Sweeney Drucker**, seaside, walking the wharf at Lido Island, Newport Beach, CA, checking out the boats ... **McGuires - Lindy, Chris, Eleanor** and **Brooke** on the sands of a Florida beach... **Zurich Esposito** teeing up while playing 18 holes in the California desert sun... IAM Publisher **Cliff Carlson** and wife, **Cathy**, in Northern California, Muir Woods sun and surf... **Leah Chavie** and **Lori Allen** with Maestro **Stanley Paul** looking Palm Springs fabulous ... bravo **James Francis McNulty** and his bride, **Anne Regan McNulty**, celebrated 48 years of marriage with their grateful five fabulous daughters... **Julie Barrish** at Carpaccio’s (my favorite) in Bal Harbor with pal, **Nina Mariano**... **Karen Schmid** at the Undertow Beach Bar in St. Pete Beach, FL... documentary producer **Michael Dolan** at Blue Mesa Lake in Gunnison, CO, with a visit from mom **Colleen Hartigan Dolan**... former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland **James Kenny** and wonderful wife, **Margaret Kenny**, of Glenview, are in Palm Beach, FL ... **Lucia Adams**, Chicago writer extraordinaire, in Naples, FL, working on a story... **Julie Harron** and **Michele Kub-**

ala at La Goulue in Palm Beach, FL ...artist **Susie Fortsmann Kealy** doing 30 days at the Canyon Ranch, the wellness resort, in Tucson AZ... Sweet congratulations to **Eleanor Banks**, mother of designer **Jeffrey Banks**, who just turned 100 on her recent Centennial Birthday, lookin’ good...

Kathy Wolter Mondelli in Nassau, Bahamas... New York socialite and businesswoman **Iris Apfel** cooking fab with high tea at home.

RING IN THE NEW: 2021 getting a boost from **Barb Bailey** with **Rosemary Fanti, Kathy Wolter Mondelli** and **Jeanne Paul** at Ralph Lauren

Bar & Grill. I just know they were eating Lobster Bisque Soup.

CHARMED LIFE: **Carrie Lannon** writes, “two years ago I planned to camp out at the High Museum in Atlanta to try and nab a ticket to the sold-out **Yayoi Kusama**: Infinity Mirrors exhibition. Ever optimistic, I visited the museum the day before to see the other art. I was effusive at the ticket counter, telling the staffer that my visit was part of a 3000 mile solo road trip and shared my camp out plans. He looked up calmly and said ‘This is your lucky day, someone just turned in an extra ticket for Yayoi if you can go now.’”

FILM FESTIVAL STAR: Chicago actor, comedian and producer, **John T. O’Brien** (a St. Ignatius College Prep grad) is sailing on the moon with the success of his “Dad Man Walking” at regional film festivals. The talented Chi-town star has two nominations. Midwest Film Festival 2020 Best Actor Nominee and Midwest Film Festival 2020 Grand Prize Nominee. A brilliant career. The whole city is cheering O’Brien on.

RADIO RETURN TO THE AIR: Chicago lawyer **Karen Conti** is back on WGN Radio AM 720, Sundays, 3 to 5 p.m. She will be taking your legal calls.

Television news is like a lightning flash. It makes a loud noise, lights up everything around it, leaves everything else in darkness and then is suddenly gone.

— **Hodding Carter**

tog515@gmail.com

Lakeview Township Real Estate For Sale

Real Estate For Sale

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION BLACKSTONE TORO OPERATING PARTNERSHIP LP n/k/a BLACKSTONE RESIDENTIAL OPERATING PARTNERSHIP LP Plaintiff,

-v- PULSE USA, INC., an Illinois corporation, RORY E. FLOT, an individual, PANDAV ENTERPRISES, INC., an Illinois corporation, MIDLAND TRUST COMPANY as Custodian FBO John SanFilippo #170688, an Illinois Self-Directed IRA, BURICH, INC., an Illinois corporation, 1138 LOMBARD, LLC, an Illinois limited liability company, ANGEL L. ANGER, an individual, THE CITY OF CHICAGO, a municipal corporation, UNKNOWN OWNERS; and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS Defendants 19 CH 000349 (Jointly Administered with Case No. 19 CH 000352) 1847 W. WARNER AVE. CHICAGO, IL 60613 NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to an Amended Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on July 27, 2020, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 10:30 AM on February 2, 2021, at The Judicial Sales Corporation, One South Wacker Drive, CHICAGO, IL, 60606, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as 1847 W. WARNER AVE., CHICAGO, IL 60613 Property Index No. 14-18-417-003-0000 The real estate is improved with a single family residence being used as a commercial investment property.

The judgment amount was \$910,534.94. Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds/wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in “AS IS” condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

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For information, Ryan W. Chapin, POLSINELLI PC Plaintiff’s Attorneys, 150 N. Riverside Plaza, Suite 3000, Chicago, IL, 60606 (312) 819-1900. Please refer to file number 083357-610146.

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

Ryan W. Chapin POLSINELLI PC 150 N. Riverside Plaza, Suite 3000 Chicago IL, 60606 312-819-1900 Fax #: 312-819-1910 E-Mail: rchapin@polsinelli.com Attorney File No. 083357-610146 Firm Number: 47375 Case Number: 19 CH 000349 TJSC#: 40-2526

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Annual Meeting of Shareholders for Central Savings, f.s.b. will be held at the office of the Association, 1601 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, Illinois, on Thursday, January 21, 2021 at the hour of 3:00 P.M. for the purpose of electing directors whose term of office will expire, hearing reports and acting on such matters as may legally come before the meeting. CENTRAL SAVINGS, f.s.b., David G. Abrahamson, Secretary.

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PLAZA from p. 1

offerings or other programming, or how such operations may impact the nearby local businesses. We have been told that most—if not all—of this information cannot be disclosed, due to the existence of a non-disclosure agreement between the developer and the proposed grocery tenant.



Ald. Andre Vasquez [40th]

“Once we started getting wind of that conversation, and we heard that they were talking to the city, we put up a public letter to let neighbors know, hey, this is a thing that’s occurring,” Vasquez said.

The alderman added a large national grocery store would increase the competition to local businesses, including Gene’s Sausage Shop, 4750 N. Lincoln Ave., Harvest Time Foods, 2632 W. Lawrence Ave., and others. However, if a business does not need a zoning change, options are limited.

“The biggest concern is for the local grocers, and others, in close-proximity. What is challenging is a world where we do not have to give approval one way or the other. We can, however, have that conversation with them and we may yet be able to use the vacation of an alley as leverage,” Vasquez said.

According to Ald. Vasquez, the developer for the grocery store may choose to redevelop the site in two separate phases to mitigate zoning issues. Phase one would include the redevelopment of the site of the current bank building and phase two would include redeveloping the site of the bank’s parking lots.

“On Jan. 28, we’re going to have a community meeting to get the community’s input on what a vision could be. And then see

going forward, what we can do to make sure the community voice is heard and what change we can affect based on the presentation,” Vasquez added.

Not knowing which grocery store chain is interested has made the situation somewhat more difficult as the different grocery store operators require a different amount of space.

“I think everyone’s got an assumption who it is, but there’s a specific nondisclosure agreement. We do not know the scale of that kind of development. Whole Foods or Amazon Fresh or something else of that scale? We do not know. We cannot confirm any of them because of the nondisclosure agreement. That is part of why we went public. We’re trying to see what else we can kind of pressure them on to get more insight,” Vasquez said.

At the meeting, the alderman also discussed the new Ainslie Arts Plaza and how it will be programmed in the future. According to Vasquez, his goal for the plaza has been to extend the community atmosphere of the Lincoln Square Mall to the north.

“When we saw that McDonald’s was going to redevelop their space, I jumped on it and said we can make better use of what had just been city parking spaces in front of the restaurant. We could use that space to really stand out.

“We had a series of meetings about what the community would like to see. There will be picnic tables and Adirondack Chairs. There will be large boxes with a lighted pole sticking out of them. There will be hammocks and we will have a large mural,” said Vasquez.

The combination will make the area more enticing for residents to meet and gather to share in a sense of community.



Artist rendering of Ainslie Arts Plaza plan at Ainslie and Western Ave.

In the future, the plaza may be programmed in a similar way to what has been done by the Davis Theater.

“We’re going to do like Davis Theater has done. We will be bringing a screen out for movies or some kinds of events. We wanted that kind of space. Right now, all the work that has been done has been with the Lincoln Square Chamber of Commerce. They have provided the money to do it and they will be reimbursed by Open Space impact funds that the city can provide. That still has to go through the committee hearing process at the Chicago City Council to be approved,” Vasquez said.

According to an official at Chicago’s Dept. of Planning and Development, the purpose of the Open Space Impact Fee program is used to fund the creation of new public open spaces. The program allocates fees that have been applied to new residential developments and which pay for land acquisition and park improvements. These

Parking lot at 4715 N. Western back in play

Aldermen Matt Martin [47th] and Andre Vasquez [40th] are hosting an online community visioning meeting 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21 about the fate of the city-owned parking lot at 4715 N. Western Ave.

Last year a development proposal was brought forward in secret to bring in a Section 8 affordable housing project to this site that caused a major controversy in the community. Losing the commercial parking lot posed a dire threat to the viability of several local cultural institutions and commercial entities. At risk would be the German Day Festival, Applefest, Mayfest, the local Farmer’s Market, the DANKHaus German Cultural Center, Old Town School of Folk Music, and the Davis Theater among other local businesses.

The 47th Ward office claims they have not received a new proposal for redevelopment on this property, and will not consider any specific proposal at this meeting. But the project remains on the alderman’s website claiming that it is “pending.” Ald. Martin says they expect to receive formal proposals in the future.

Another city-owned parking lot in Logan Square was recently redeveloped and that too created controversy in that community.

fees range from \$313 to \$1,253. These credits are provided for certain projects that include open space. Expenditures require approval by the Chicago City Council and are allocated within the community where the funds were generated. The funds cannot be used for maintenance or the replacement of playground equipment.

Due to the close proximity to the 47th Ward, Ald. Matt Martin is also planning to include his ward in the conversation.

REFORMS from p. 1

would be able to collect signatures to try to prohibit vacation rentals from setting up shop.

Anyone with a property listed for short-term rental on a hosting platform like Airbnb must now register with the city. This does not apply if you already have a valid shared housing unit registration, vacation rental license, or bed and breakfast license. Each unique address must be registered and have a license, but individual listings within the same address do not need a separate registration number.

The ordinance also includes a ban on short-term rentals that last only one night in an effort to block huge parties that have become a regular nuisance in some neighborhoods. Several private homes were rented to host private pay-per-entry house parties in Bucktown and Old Town that grew quite large and out of hand. In August, Airbnb placed a 16-person cap on reservations, banned parties and started to sue guests who were responsible for these events. They have also started testing technology to block suspicious bookings and suspended some party houses from its listings.

There are more than 8,800 shared housing units licensed by the city to be rented through Airbnb and HomeAway, Chicago officials said. Many are clustered around the downtown area, Rush St., Bucktown, Wicker Park, Old Town, River North, Lincoln Park, Lakeview and Wrigleyville.

As part of this new regulatory structure, Chicagoans that use platforms like Airbnb or HomeAway among others to rent their residential units will now need to apply directly with the Dept. of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection and pay a new

\$125 registration tax. The current flat registration tax is set at \$7,500 for online platforms such as Airbnb that list between 500 and 999 units, and \$5,000 for those that list fewer than 500 units. Platforms with 1,000 or more units would pay a \$10,000 registration tax. Each unit listed also triggers a \$125 annual tax.

The city claims that these taxes will be used to ensure regulations are being met and take enforcement when necessary against problem locations.

Under the revised rules, hosts and individual property owners will not be allowed to list their apartments or homes on a licensed home-sharing platform until the city approves their license.

According to the Share Housing ordinance, the following information is required to be given to the city during registration: The host’s name (this should be the primary resident, not a co-host or business); the address of the unit being registered; the contact information for the host or a local

contact person, such as a co-host, including email address and phone number; whether the unit being listed is the host’s primary residence, a single family home, unit in a multi-unit building; and whether the listing will make the entire dwelling unit available for rent or a room or portion of the dwelling unit available for rent.

WILLIAMS from p. 1

case before the Democratic Women’s Caucus during a private virtual meeting Jan. 6.

Madigan, who has served as speaker for all but two years since 1983, has been struggling to maintain his grip on power since July when he was implicated in a yearslong bribery scheme in which utility giant Commonwealth Edison awarded no-work jobs and lobbying contracts to his associates in order to curry his favor for legislation that benefited the company.

Madigan has not been charged and has denied any wrongdoing, but the scandal has eroded his support within the Democratic caucus to the point where he no longer has the 60 votes needed to be reelected speaker.

Democrats will have 73 votes in the House when the 102nd General Assembly convenes on Wednesday, Jan. 13, but so far 19 of those Democrats have said publicly that they will not support Madigan for another term.

Williams, a member of the party’s liberal wing, was just reelected to her sixth term in the House. She currently chairs the House Energy and Environment Committee. In her statement, she said her priorities have included addressing the climate crisis and protecting access to reproductive health care.

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