

That money talks, I'll not deny,
I heard it once: It said, 'Goodbye.'
— Richard Armour

NEWS-STAR

AN INSIDE PUBLICATIONS NEWSPAPER

INSIDE:
Rogers Park Township
First Pass
Property Reassessment

FREE

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NEWS OF ROGERS PARK, EDGEWATER, UPTOWN & ANDERSONVILLE

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Fate of new high-rise at Weiss Hospital a mystery after rogue vote

Apparently they're still counting votes at the 46th Ward. Or not.

In the balance is a proposed new 12-story, 314 unit, rental residential building that may have a total height of 159', with 136 on-site parking spaces.

Lincoln Property Company's proposal for the Weiss Hospital parking lot at 4600 N. Marine Dr. was rejected by the 46th Ward's Zoning and Development Committee earlier this month in a tight vote. But now Ald. James Cappleman [46th] will determine the project's fate after a member of that committee changed his 'rogue' vote after casting a deciding vote.



Due to a changed vote, the fate of a proposed new high rise on the 4600 block of Marine Dr. is unknown.

The final margin was close, separated by only one: 16 votes against, 15 votes in favor, and one abstention.

Shortly after that, the vice president of Northalsted Business Alliance [NHBA], who voted "against" the proposal (via their rep Lake Alen) at the prior meeting, appealed to Ald. Cappleman and asked that the "no" vote cast at last week's meeting be reversed and changed to a vote in favor of the project. Officials with the NHBA said its acting executive director, Lake Alen, went rogue voting "no" on the project against the group's wishes.

The NHBA says that their organization previously met and voted in favor of the proposal, and then at the June 11 meeting, Alen vot-

ROGUE see p. 12

Chicago USPS Postmaster replaced

Home-delivery of mail by the U.S. Postal Service on Chicago's North Side has wavered between dismal and well below average for more than a decade.

For the last 18-months, for some communities, receiving mail was at best a once-a-week occurrence. This newspaper reported several times about communities complaining about weeks-in-a-row passing with no mail delivered to the home.

Improvements brought on by interventions by U.S. Reps. Jan Schakowsky and Mike Quigley proved temporary - and now the

Chicago Post Office has just announced a leadership change after years of mail service complaints. According to an internal announcement, Chicago Postmaster Wanda Prater has been replaced by Eddie Morgan Jr., most recently of the Kansas City post office. She left her job June 12 following tens of thousands of complaints from all over the Chicagoland region.

"The mail delivery in our neighborhood has been a problem for years now," said Ald. Debra Silverstein [50th], whose Rogers Park and West Ridge communi-

ties have been particularly neglected in the last 18 months.

"Many [residents] have called me about postal issues, and more than 100 local residents came to a town hall meeting I held last year with the leadership of USPS. I have been working to resolve these issues, and I am pleased to hear that the postal service is finally beginning to take it seriously."

Other North Side communities who also reported poor mail service were Lakeview, Lincoln Park, Uptown and Edgewater.

Assessor's office releases first property reassessments

Residential, commercial properties in Rogers Park Township show robust growth

The Cook County Assessor's Office released initial assessments of residential and commercial properties in the township of Rogers Park. This is the first of eight townships in the City of Chicago to be reassessed in 2021 and the first Chicago township to be reassessed under the leadership of Assessor Fritz Kaegi, who took office after Chicago's last reassessment in 2018.

"Despite the pandemic, Chicago's real estate market is showing strength," said Assessor Kaegi. "In many parts of the City, home values are steady or rising. COVID-19 has had negative impacts on some commercial real estate types, but generally, rents have increased since 2018, driving property values higher."

Increases in assessments reflect a robust market. Assessments, under Illinois law, should reflect overall market values. The first step to ensuring property owners pay only their fair share of property taxes—without needing

to file appeals to correct inaccurate assessments—is to make sure assessments of all property types accurately reflect the real estate market.

In the Assessor's Office 2021 models, in 2020, median sale prices of homes in Rogers Park were about \$380,000 for single-family homes and \$150,000 for condos.

In its models, the Assessor's Office estimated single-family homes have a 2021 market value between \$320,000 and \$410,000, and condos between \$130,000 and \$170,000. Estimates depend on the individual property's location and characteristics.

Assessments of single-family and condominium properties in Rogers Park for 2021 met all International Assoc. of Assessing Officer standards for high-quality assessments. Single-family homes in the bottom third of property values saw the most improvement on these assessment quality measures.

Third-party reporting, including a 2017 report in the Chicago Tribune, showed that the previous reassessments of the City of Chicago resulted in overassessment of some lower-value homes while higher-value homes typically were underassessed.

Commercial assessments

Hotels and retail properties are among the sectors with the largest declines since the onset of COVID, whereas rents in multi-family apartments, grocery stores, industrial buildings, and data centers have been stable or experienced positive growth since the onset of COVID.

In the 2021 models, market rents for apartments in Rogers Park range from \$780 to \$2000 a month. Market vacancy is at 9%. Market values are estimated from \$47,000 to \$208,000 per unit.

Offices in Rogers Park range in size from 2,200 to 48,000 in

PROPERTY see p. 12



Money, masterpieces, marriage and medicine
Page 3

(L) East Rogers Parker Mary Bao. (R) Ebony, right, and Kristen Ambrose.

Community visioning meetings for Uptown, Edgewater

This summer Ald. Harry Osterman [48th] will host a series of hyper-local community visioning meetings for areas adjacent to Berwyn, Argyle and Bryn Mawr.

The alderman says that his office is receiving inquiries and proposals regarding new developments, and that the meetings will be opportunities to connect with neighbors to collaborate on a shared vision for the future of those communities.

"Our community is seeing the largest investment in public infrastructure in a lifetime with the Red Purple Modernization Project. With the completion of this project, we expect to see ad-

ditional private investments with the renovation and redevelopment of properties along the Red Line," he said.

Ald. Osterman will hold multiple meetings for each region, starting with the Argyle community kick-off meeting for neighbors east of Broadway, from Foster to Ainslie. That will be held 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, July 17. The second meeting will be for the Bryn Mawr community, for neighbors east of Broadway, from Hollywood to Balmoral, 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, August 21.

The outdoor locations for each meeting has not yet been announced.

Armed robber targeting stores on Far North Side; 4 cases this month

BY CWBCHICAGO

11:51 p.m.

An armed robber has held up four stores in Rogers Park and West Ridge since June 3, according to a community alert from Area Three detectives. Police reports indicate he is targeting liquor and convenience stores.

The man typically displays a firearm and demands cash from an employee, police said. It's not clear if he uses a vehicle to escape. According to the community alert and police reports, the man robbed:

- Basil Food & Liquor, 7446 N. Western, at 10:51 p.m. on June 3. The community alert erroneously said this robbery happened at

- An unknown business on the 1300 block of W. Touhy at 10:28 p.m. on June 14

- 7-Eleven, 6801 N. Sheridan, at 5:27 a.m. on June 17

- Soo Liquors, 1428 W. Morse, at 2:22 p.m. on June 17

Police said the robber is a Black male between 18- and 27-years-old who stands 5'-7" to 6' tall and weighs 150 to 175 lbs. He has worn a black zip-up North Face jacket, black sweatpants, white gym shoes, and mechanic gloves, according to the alert.

Anyone with information about the crimes can contact Area Three detectives at 312-744-8263 regarding crime pattern #P21-3-078.

CTA lowering fares

In an effort to encourage people to start using CTA buses and trains again, from now through Labor Day (Monday, Sept. 6), the CTA will offer attractive discounts on three of its unlimited-ride passes. A one-day pass will be \$5 (down from \$10); a three-day pass, \$15 (down from \$20), and a seven-day pass, \$20 (down from \$28).

The promotional fares will be available for purchase at Ventra Vending Machines at CTA rail

stations, on the Ventra app, on the Ventra website, at over 1,000 retail locations, or by calling 877-669-8368.

After dropping by nearly 90% due to the pandemic and economic lockdown, CTA ridership has been slowly increasing since the start of the year, and the CTA hopes that these lower promotional fares will help sustain additional ridership growth. Currently, the CTA serves more than 500,000 riders on an average weekday.

Taxi! Taxi! City can't defend us from the Kale Mob



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

The City of Chicago genuinely seems to be returning to life, but I'm at a loss, beyond the measure of a quandary.

Fans are beginning to show up at Wrigley Field. Sailors are skimming the waters of Lake Michigan with wind in their sails. Restaurants are booking reservations. Churches are rehearsing almost forgotten hymns. They're making a movie outside my house. Some Chicagoans are actually going to the funerals of their friends. The Palmer House has been spruced up. Old Town Art Fair came back from the dead. Lollapalooza is on the horizon. And members of the Chicago Symphony orchestra are tuning up their fiddles.

It looks like we are returning from the brink of pandemic and a forced economic shut down. On Bloomsday (June 16) no less. James Joyce would be proud. Like Hansel and Gretel. Half-baked.

Wetting our whistles with our pals, lunching with a small group of loved ones. Eating West Coast oysters for the first time in a year. Fitting into our pre-pandemic jeans. Eating watermelon and loving it.

But we're still finding our way. A closer look demands a deeper understanding of conditions. Flights are slow returning to O'Hare, the Chicago Public Schools are still in chaos and disarray. Not everything is making a quick comeback. For instance, what's up with Uber?

I've been an Uber-user and fan

for a long time. Why not? Most of the time they're just two minutes away, and there's no need for cash.

Most drivers know North from South, and that expressways are for tourists.

Living in East Village, I'm in an Uber neighborhood. Surrounded by fellow Uber-users. You know, hipster types, new attorneys, traders, waiters, bartenders. Service industry types and artists.

People who always need a lift somewhere.

Back in March I received my first COVID job at the Clark and Diversey Walmart. Uber came and collected me. But the ride was more expensive than usual. \$22, not the \$12 as it was normally.

Pandemic blackmail, I reasoned. Many drivers were out of work. Many cars (including most taxi's) withdrawn from use. Not as many folks traveling across the urban grid.

After the job my return ride was an even bigger ambush, costing twice as much. Somewhere around the \$40 range. I had no choice, I needed to get home.

When Uber appeared last Friday around 9:30 a.m. to take me to the Loop, I was cheered that it was a roomy Toyota. My lady driver said "hello."

I made sure my mask was in place, and said "hello."

But the music was so loud I didn't think she heard me. The air was on. But all the windows were closed. So I made two requests. First, I said, shouldn't the windows be down? She replied it was too hot out to lower them. I told her that in the winter I rode in Ubers with all the windows open. She had no reply.

Then I asked her to lower the radio as the music was too loud. She uttered an awful grunt and without pulling away from the curb said, "Get out. I'm canceling this ride."

I asked her to reconsider, and apologized if anything I said upset her.



Many Yellow Cab drivers seem to see Uber for what it is, a reheated plate of vegan swill.

She said, "Get out. You give me too much stress."

Again I apologized, and said I was a cardiac patient going to my doctor. Would she reconsider? "No," she said. "I don't care. Get out."

I had to scramble for another Uber, it came quickly, and got me to the doctor on time.

But my earlier lady driver had left me in mild hysterics. Not a great preparation for a doctor's visit. I felt victimized and angry. No Chicagoan should have to endure such a thing.

Recently I called an Uber to collect me after lunch. I expected the charge to be about \$12, but apparently it was a busy late afternoon.

Uber told me they couldn't do it for less than \$35.

Once again it felt like a stick-up. Urban robbery. A modern snatch and grab.

If you need to be somewhere quickly, it's no use trying to appeal to any larger virtue or value.

Do we all miss our taxis yet, with their set rates?

I was fuming. Getting robbed by Uber in broad daylight appears to be the perfect metaphor for living in a community governed by the bewildering Mayor Lori Lightfingers. With the complete mismanagement of real values and business intelligence. Nothing but the crude and hostile shakedown of business customers. Has no one thought of the consequences that flow from such a narrow urban business model?

Since all of my many bad Uber experiences took place, I have been flooded with suggestions on how to better use existing city taxis. They're still working the streets. Learning how to connect to these tried and true Chicago rides is our best hope. The latest urban skill.

These taxis have a lot to offer. Economical lifts. Competent, thoughtful. Older drivers. Road vets. I've found kind and courteous taxi drivers still live. Many Yellow Cab drivers seem to see Uber for what it is, a reheated plate of vegan swill. The perfect party food from Univ. of Chicago. Transport for the lactose intolerant crowd, the almond milk brigade, the kale mob.

Why isn't Mayor Lightfingers dialoguing with Uber about their massive overcharging?

Why is the city not warning prospective passengers that they are getting "fleeced" by Uber?

Did she learn nothing at the Federal Attorney's Office?

We know from experience that there are far fewer taxi cabs these days on Chicago streets. Uber delivered the knockout punch.

There's no mistaking the convenience and economy that Uber first unleashed on the streets of America. But the public should not be allowed to be victimized by the rabid greed of Uber. There's so much more to the story than just the price gouging and poor business skills demonstrated by Uber drivers.

There's the clear perception that Chicagoans can't count on the City of Chicago to protect or defend them in the face of Uber aggression or unilateral price gouging. There's the common experience shared across the city that over time Uber has brought about a significant sea change. They now control the conditions and command much authority in what will transpire with alternative transportation across the city. Neighborhood by neighborhood.

I'd like to know how financially supportive Uber has been to Mayor Lightfingers and her crew? Do current conditions appear fair, equitable, reasoned or rational? Who are these people who have taken over our motorways?

How much more of Chicago's essential life has been squandered or given away? Between the Gold Coast riots and the pillaging of businesses; the sad defacement of Chicago's artistic culture; the weariness of this city's corporate executives to even engage local political leadership; and the abandonment of our fabulous restaurant industry by the city, what kind of future does history hold for people who love Chicago?

Time is running out. We fast approach becoming the American capitol of urban carjackings to match our #1 ranking in shootings. Another honor that kind of floated unnoticed to earth. No thanks, Mayor Lightfoot. You can keep your dystopian vision of post-pandemic Chicago. It is a frightening vision to behold. It's no longer life as we knew it.

THE ART OF BANKSY: The world's largest collection of

privately-owned **Banksy** coming to Chicago July 1. Buy now at www.banksyexhibit.com/

DEPAUL UNIV: A. Gabriel Esteban, PhD, the 12th president of DePaul Univ. since July 1, 2017 has resigned. He is the first lay leader in DePaul's history.

CHICAGO SYNTAX CHANGE: I could be wrong but checking the record it seems as though Chicago has undergone a vocabulary alteration. A syntax change. That's the introduction of the words "Mass Shootings," referring to the expanded gun violence that is now beyond all control. The ordinary vocabulary and headline words no longer suffice.

MAIFEST: It's been a busy few weeks at DANK Haus in Lincoln Square. Despite a second year with no street affair, they officially kicked off summer with a Maifest earlier this month, where they were fortunate to raise over \$40,000 for the Haus. Those German's love a party.



Winston Churchill by Banksy.

OLD TOWN ALIVE: The 2021 Old Town Art Fair has been a catalyst for urban awakening

along the treasured streets of one of Chicago's greatest and most venerable neighborhoods. Everyone was out in great summer style. No one more than honorary Old Town Mayor **Shelley Howard**, artist **Norman Baugher** and his wise wife, **Shirley Baugher**.

TAXI see p. 8

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E: insidepublicationschicago@gmail.com



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Jackie Taylor
Photo by Daniel Nicholas



Eighth graders Kathryn, right, and Maude, both are from RP.



East Rogers Parker Mary Bao, painting at the Fest since its first year.



Ebony, right, and Kristen Ambrose of RP.



Longtime participant Tina Juhlin, of West RP.

Money, masterpieces, marriage and medicine



Heart of the 'Hood by Felicia Dechter

No one is more deserving of a \$5 million grant than Black Ensemble Theater (BET) founder, executive director and CEO Jackie Taylor.

Congratulations to Jackie! Look for the story in this newspaper about the generous \$5 M grant from Jeff Bezo's ex-wife MacKenzie Scott.

I know there are many theaters in the city that would love, and deserve, a wind-fall like this. But if anyone has paid their dues, it's Jackie. When I first started going to her productions, they were held in an Uptown building's basement. But it never really mattered where the shows were held. It was all about the magic they contained.

I was there the day ground was broken on the theater's new site on Clark St. Excitement and good vibes filled the air. And soon thereafter, audiences filled the seats.

Jackie started BET with a critical mission, through the arts she aims to eradicate racism and its devastating effects on society. Yes, that's a tall order. But when you're at a BET show, for those couple of hours it just seems like everyone is the same. When you're inside Taylor's theater, you can't help but be grooving to the music and mesmerized by the talent.

If you've never been to a BET musical feast, get there as soon as COVID-ly possible.

Jackie's story is one of neighborhood girl done good. She was a kid growing up in Cabrini Green and was the only one caught after a bunch of kids broke a window at Seward Park on Division St. The others ran faster and Jackie was busted by the park's drama instructor who gave her a choice: either he called the police or she came to

his drama class. Jackie of course, chose the latter, which she credits with "saving" her. After that she never wanted to do anything else except theater. The rest is history.

Today, Jackie is extremely grateful for this manna from Heaven and Scott.

Jackie said she thinks it's vitally important that funders, philanthropists, and others understand that the impact made at BET is directly tied to their continued support. "For the sustainability of impactful programming, systems, structures and staff, fundraising must be ongoing. It can never stop," she said.

"We hope it will serve as an impetus for others to also be financially supportive, helping us to continue delivering our educational outreach programming to thousands of underserved youths, and producing vital productions and programs that help to dismantle the foundation of racism," Jackie said. "We have great dreams for the future [and] MacKenzie Scott has played an important role in moving our dreams toward reality."

We can't wait to get back to BET but meanwhile, we send lots of hallelujahs and good thoughts its way regarding this big, bountiful bonanza.

Move over Monet... because the artwork at this year's Artists of the Wall Fest was stellar! Held last weekend in Loyola Park, although this year's fest was a little different with staggered days, it was still a great time. Thanks to the Loyola Park Advisory Council for its hard work.

For me, the most touching part was the memorial section. There, I met Kristen Ambrose and her mom, Ebony, who had created a small painting in honor of their brother and son Kevin Ambrose, who was just 19 and had lived 7,056 days of life when he became a victim of gun violence on the city's South Side in 2013.

"I moved to Rogers Park as a haven in Nov. 2014," said Ebony, who was working at The Cradle in Evanston at the time. "I didn't think it would be Utopia, but it's still pleasant where I live. And there's violence



Laura Castle and Bradley Schacht on the Irv Kupcincet Bridge. Photo by Becky Brown

wherever you go."

Even though the fest is held spitting distance from my house, I took a pass on my family painting this year, as did some of my neighbors. One neighbor tried but couldn't land a spot, while another didn't want to spend the \$43.

Those are exactly my gripes with the fest, which is now getting close to being 30-years old. I have been there since the beginning as it was founded by my neighbor, Keith Lord. What started as a community event for \$6 a space, plus free paint, is now \$35 plus \$8 for paint. We are not the Gold Coast or Lincoln Park. We are a working class 'hood. And although the money benefits Loyola Park, and I can afford it, these days, especially during COVID, many people just cannot.

Some people who live in the neighborhood can't even get spots as they sell out very quickly. I suggest a zip code priority to 60626, then 60645 and other neighboring zips.

Anyway, it was a lovely weekend out in the park and at the lakefront. Be sure to walk on over and check out all the great new works.



RP resident Fawna Demma and Julian, 20 months. Fawna has been painting at the wall since she was 16, she is now 36.

Coosome twosome... congrats to my former co-worker George Castle, whose daughter, Laura Castle got hitched to Bradley Schacht on June 11, on the plaza next to the Chicago River and across the street from Marina City. Growing up in a newspaper family, Laura took a special photo with Bradley, appropriately, on the Irv Kupcincet Bridge.

Father of the bride, happy for his front-row "box seat" in the intimate wedding, is George, a former longtime Lerner Newspapers (including this newspaper) columnist and 21-time author. He did not have to walk the bride down the aisle in the ceremony, but is rehearsing such a role for next June, when Laura and Bradley plan a big indoor party and wedding ceremony at the Lincolnshire Marriott to reflect the pandemic's re-opening.

MONEY see p. 4



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The magic is back at Chicago Magic Lounge, re-opening Aug. 2

After a 16-month intermission, the Magic is coming back to Chicago Magic Lounge [CML], 5050 N. Clark St.

Chicago's home for close-up magic has announced plans to re-open its speakeasy-style Art Deco venue on Aug. 2.

CML will be open at capacity, including the Blackstone Cabaret, 654 Club and Performance Bar. To celebrate CML will be hosting a full week of signature shows, from Aug. 2-8.

Headliner shows include Luis Carreon and Justin Purcell, while Paige Thompson will perform a close-up magic set in the 654 Club. The Performance Bar will feature AJ Sacco, Deven Brown, and The Amazing Bibik.

The lounge "is like no other place in Chicago. We can't wait to welcome our audience, magicians and staff. [We'll be] featuring CML company members and local fan favorites, who rank alongside the best magicians worldwide," said CML owner Joey Cranford.

For more information call 312-366-4500 or visit chicagomagiclounge.com.

Guests who purchase premium tickets are invited to an exclusive performance of close-up magic directly after the main stage show in our 43-seat close-up gallery, The 654 Club.

21

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Another \$600 million needed to finish Cabrini-Green's transformation

With a public price tag already exceeding \$300 million, the 23-year-long effort to rejuvenate the area around the former public housing project is set to take at least 12 more years and could approach a total of nearly \$1 billion.

BY ALEJANDRA CANCINO AND NATALIE EILBERT
Better Government Assoc.

More than two decades after the first wrecking ball slammed into Chicago's most well-known public housing project to begin a nearly \$300 million makeover on Cabrini-Green, Mayor Lori Lightfoot is doubling down with another \$600 million in tax money to finish it.

Lightfoot's administration says the future property taxes are necessary to complete the transformation of the once-maligned area into a bustling community of mostly luxury apartments surrounded by restaurants and stores.

Lightfoot's new infusion of taxpayer money into an area that's already a windfall for developers is renewing the debate about who has won and lost on the massive redevelopment, especially when so much public money has been diverted from schools, police and libraries.

"They didn't do anything right from the onset in the redevelopment of our neighborhood," said J.R. Fleming, the executive director of The Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, and a former resident of Cabrini-Green. "And now they want us to believe that they will get it right this time. They didn't get it right the first time. What makes you think they will get it right this time?"

Last year, Lightfoot's administration quietly pushed through the Illinois legislature permission to extend the special designation of a 340-acre area on the Near North Side, including the former



The long-shuttered Near North Career Metropolitan High School was demolished with the help of property tax funds set aside for the redevelopment of the area through a tax increment financing fund. Construction, which is ongoing, is part of the Chicago Housing Authority's plan to redevelop the former site of the Cabrini-Green public housing buildings.
Photo by Davon Clark, CatchLight Local

site of Cabrini-Green. The extension would allow her to use future tax revenue generated there for additional development.

The city has not specified exactly how it plans to use the additional cash, other than noting it would help fund the Chicago Housing Authority's [CHA] plan to reshape the area. In 2015, the CHA released a three-phase plan to redevelop the area's remaining empty parcels of land. It called for the construction of up to 2,830 units of housing by 2025. The initial work is ongoing.

Money for the additional construction would come from the practice of Tax-Increment Financing [TIF], in which taxes from increased land value are captured for use in the district. Spending is overseen by a board of mayoral appointees and approved by the Chicago City Council. The Near North TIF District is the fourth largest by revenue among the nearly 140 TIF districts throughout the city.

Already 23 years old, the district was scheduled to sunset this year, which would mean property tax money created in the area would begin funneling into general funds. Springfield's approval to extend the district another 12

years means Lightfoot's administration can move forward with the final steps to finalize the extension. Earlier this month, the mayor's advisory panel that makes recommendations on economic development set a public hearing on the TIF extension for Aug. 10.

The Near North TIF has been controversial since it was created in 1997 by former Mayor Richard M. Daley, with public housing residents arguing the city's plan would displace them to make room for wealthier Chicagoans.

Daley's plan included demolishing public high-rises and then expanding the area's parks, opening dead-end streets, building new schools and redeveloping the area with "mixed-income" communities. Daley promised residents living there at the time they wouldn't be displaced, but only a fraction of them now live in the pricey developments taxpayers helped finance.

Fleming, the former Cabrini-Green resident, said construction has taken so long that many former residents have given up hope they would ever be able to return. Some have even died waiting, he said.

As Cabrini-Green made national headlines and was portrayed as

rife with crime and staggering poverty, Daley and the CHA envisioned a transformation using a public-private investment model. To help finance it, the city created the Near North TIF. Most of the land within the TIF was owned by the CHA, which meant the parcels didn't generate any property taxes before construction began. The CHA has leased portions of its land over the last 20 years to developers to build a mix of public, affordable and market-rate housing units.

Today, the area, just a mile to the north and slightly west of downtown, is dotted with luxury condos and apartment buildings.

But the city's Dept. of Planning and Development [DPD] said in a recently released report the additional funding is necessary "to help complete the substantial build-out" of the area's redevelopment, including the empty parcels of land owned by the CHA next to the Target store and south of Division St.

The report was made to Lightfoot's advisory panel, the city's Community Development Commission, which is charged with making recommendations to the

CABRINI see p. 9

MONEY from p. 3

"Seems like just yesterday when Laura was crawling off her blanket at warp speed at Indian Boundary Park and bringing the Cubs good luck in 1984," said the proud papa. "That just goes to show you gotta enjoy life because it races by. I was just overwhelmed by the fact Laura was getting married 'so soon' in my mind after that Indian Boundary scene and amid that spectacular vista of the Chicago skyline and

river."

Mother of the bride is Nina Castle. The three Castles all had roots in Rogers Park, Edgewater and West Rogers Park -- Nina and George are both 1973 Mather High alums. Parents of the groom are Peggy Ishikawa of Evanston and Jack Schacht of Warrenville.

Here's wishing Laura and Bradley a loving, happy and healthy life together!

Three cheers for free clinic... Marjorie Goran, from the Old Irving Park Clinic, 5425 W. Addi-

son St., spoke at the Kiwanis Club of Lakeview last week.

Their unique purpose is to serve those who are not insured but in need of medical attention. There is a small paid staff but the bulk of the work falls on volunteer doctors, nurses, social workers, etc.

The doctors and nurses love it as there is no paperwork to do, and no insurance forms to fill out. So they don't have to spend a whole consultation staring at a computer screen and tapping on a keyboard.

And there are some top notch medical pro's volunteering there too.

If you show up with an insurance card, you are asked to find another clinic. Non-citizen? No problem. Since the pandemic the demand for behavioral health services has greatly increased. It is truly amazing all they accomplish due to the generosity of others. What would we do without people like this?

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Black Ensemble Theater awarded \$5 million grant from MacKenzie Scott

BY SHEILA SWANN

Have you ever wondered what it might feel like to fetch the mail one day and find a \$5 million check waiting... and this time it's not a lottery winnings scam from some unknown cousin living in Indonesia?

Black Ensemble Theater [BET] Founder, Executive Director and CEO Jackie Taylor might be able to tell you.

She announced that the theater has received an incredible \$5 million grant from MacKenzie Scott, Jeff Bezo's ex-wife. Taylor hopes that this gift will motivate other philanthropists and funders to also support BET and the arts in general.

Like most of the donations Scott is sending out these days, it was not solicited by anyone at BET, it just showed up in the mail.

In Scott's announcements of the grants award, "It was said that the purpose of her gifts was to enable the work of the organizations. She also stated that it was 'a signal of trust and encouragement, to them and to others,'" said Taylor. "This gave me great pride in knowing that our work to eradicate racism and its devastating effects was being recognized, supported, and respected in such a significant way."

Scott went on to ask a very important question: 'Would these organizations still benefit from more (more advocates, more money, more volunteers)? Yes.'

"That 'yes' was music to my ears. It is vitally important that

funders, philanthropists, and others understand that the impact we make at BET is directly tied to their continued support. For the sustainability of impactful programming, systems, structures and staff, fundraising must be ongoing. It can never stop," said Taylor.

'Would these organizations still benefit from more (more advocates, more money, more volunteers)? Yes,' wrote MacKenzie Scott.

"We are grateful for this substantial gift. It will assist us in our recovery from the devastation of COVID. We are in our second year of having no earned income. It is going to take at least another two years for full and complete recovery. This gift will indeed help us through that recovery process," she said. "This has strengthened our foundation and enhanced our ability to continue our important work within the community. We hope it will serve as an impetus for others to also be financially supportive, helping us to continue delivering our educational outreach programming to thousands of underserved youths, and producing vital productions and programs that help to dismantle the foundation of racism."

"We have great dreams for the future of BET - MacKenzie Scott has played an important role in moving our dreams toward reality."

BET was founded in 1976, by producer, playwright and actress



Black Ensemble Theater Founder Jackie Taylor.

Jackie Taylor. It is the only African American theater located in the culturally, racially and ethnically diverse north side Uptown community. Through its Five Play Season of Excellence, The BET has dazzled audiences locally, nationally and internationally with original musicals that are entertaining, educational and uplifting. BET has produced more than 100 productions and employed over 5,000 artists.

The mission of BET is to eradicate racism and its devastating effects upon society through the theater arts. For more information visit www.BlackEnsembleTheater.org or call 773-769-4451.

Letter to the Editor

Why is Ald. Martin enriching his friends at The Community Builders?

Ald. Matt Martin has been as busy as a beaver.

No, not working to get more police into the 47th Ward.

No, not getting a new selective enrollment public high school built to serve our children.

He's been busy enriching his "friends" at The Community Builders [TCB].

In order to get a City-owned piece of land on State St. in the South Loop, TCB will pay the City \$1. One whole dollar. Oh goody.

According to the June 17 Chicago Sun-Times TCB will "gift" the City \$2 million dollars for Pritzker Park for the land valued at \$7.95 million dollars.

So the City will lose \$5.95 mil-

lion dollars right off the start.

And that's not including TCB management fees, tax credits, subsidies, TIF funds and blessings from the Chicago Housing Authority [CHA].

Remember, former CHA Commissioner Nash is a director of TCB.

But what is Martin getting from TCB? Could it be hiding in the blacked-out FOIA requests City Hall and Martin gave to Inside Publications?

And what is to be given to the neighborhood from TCB?

Certainly not more police patrols nor a new selective enrollment public high school.

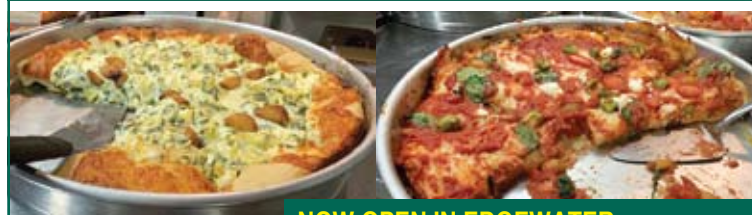
Michael Sullivan

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Arts fest seeks artists

Edgewater Arts Festival still has some booths available for artists and sponsors.

The Fest will be Aug. 28 and 29, from 11-7 p.m. Artists can apply in the Zapp software link here: <https://www.zappapplication.org/event-info.php?ID=9424>.

There is no application fee, and the \$275 booth fee includes the City of Chicago \$25 vendor fee.

for more information contact Kevin Flynn with any artist or sponsorship questions at eaim-callforartists@gmail.com. Or those interested may apply from their website at www.edgewaterartists.com.

Get a book and give blood

The Lincoln Park Branch Library, 1150 W. Fullerton Ave. will host a blood drive with Versiti Blood Center of Illinois from noon to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 29.

The blood drive will take place in a mobile bus parked on the south side of Fullerton Ave., directly across the street from the Lincoln Park Branch. To register for the drive, call 800-786-4483. A valid photo I.D. and face mask are required.



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Police Beat...

Up to a dozen teens beat, rob girl at Chicago Red Line CTA station

Police are investigating after a group of teenagers chased, beat, and robbed a 16-year-old at the Chicago Red Line CTA station June 15, according to CPD. It began around 9:19 p.m. when a group of 10 to 12 male and female teenagers blocked the path of some friends who were walking and refused to let them pass, police spokesperson Sally Bown said.

The 16-year-old girl pushed her way through the crowd, which caused the group to get angry and chase her onto the platform, Bown said. The group then allegedly beat the girl until she fell to the platform, and one offender stole her phone.

All of the teens then ran from the station. No arrests have been made.

This incident was the latest in a string of robberies involving teenage offenders on and near the CTA's downtown train system: June 10, a woman was hit in the head and robbed on the Roosevelt Orange Line platform by two teenagers around 3 p.m.

Around 7:30 a.m. June 12, a 19-year-old woman reported that three teenagers robbed her as they passed through the cars of a Blue Line train downtown. She followed the robbers, all believed to be about 14-years-old, from the train at Jackson but lost them in the tunnel that leads to the Red Line, according to a CPD report. After the robbery, witnesses reported seeing a similarly-described group stealing phones and purses outside the Roosevelt station at least twice over the next hour. No arrests were made.

At 12:30 p.m. June 13, a 27-year-old woman was robbed and pushed into a train at the Clark Lake Blue Line station. The offender fled from the station.

Police seek woman in random stabbing attacks; possible anti-Asian motive eyed

A woman has stabbed three people at random and threatened to shoot a fourth person in a series of attacks on the North Side, according to Chicago police.

This reporter has learned exclusively that the woman threatened to shoot one of the victims because he is Asian and at least one of the stabbing victims is also an Asian man. Police did not mention any motive in the alert, nor did CPD mention any pattern of Asians being targeted.

Police have linked a recent stabbing inside a Lakeview grocery store, a random stabbing near the Thorndale Red Line CTA station, and two other incidents in Uptown to one suspect. According to the alert, victims have been targeted "for no apparent reason."

At about 8:45 p.m. June 5, a woman wearing a pink top attacked a 24-year-old Asian man from behind as he walked with his girlfriend on the 1000 block of W. Thorndale. Then, she

ran away. The victim was transported to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center for treatment.

Around 4:40 p.m. June 9, a woman wearing a pink top and jeans implied she had a gun and threatened to shoot a man because he is Asian on the 4800 block of N. Broadway, a CPD report said. The man was not injured.

At 4:25 p.m. June 11, a woman wearing a pink top stabbed a customer inside the Lakeview East Mariano's grocery store, 3030 N. Broadway. Police said the victim was female, but witnesses said the victim appeared to be a man. No motive was given for the attack, and the victim's racial background is not known.

A fourth victim was stabbed in an apparently random attack on the 4800 block of N. Marine Drive around 10:45 a.m. June 5, according to the CPD. No further information was available about the incident or the victim.

Police said the attacker is a Black woman who stands 5'-6" to 5'-8" tall. She wore a pink top in three of the incidents, police said. We have learned that the June 9 victim said the woman had very short hair.

Anyone with information about the woman can call Area Three detectives at 312-744-8261.

Divvy biker slapped gun from armed robber's hand in Rogers Park, prosecutors say

A Divvy biker punched and disarmed a gunman who tried to rob him in Rogers Park, according to prosecutors and police. The alleged robber was arrested a few minutes later when he crossed paths with a CPD squad car that was driving the victim around the neighborhood.

The bicyclist noticed another biker, who wasn't wearing a mask, riding behind him as he traveled home around 1:15 p.m. June 12. When he arrived at his destination in the 7300 block of N. Ridge, the other bicyclist turned toward him, pulled a revolver from his pocket, and demanded his chain and bag, Assistant State's Attorney Brian Burkhardt said.

But the Divvy biker wasn't having it. He slapped the gunman's hand away, then ran, hid, and called police, according to Burkhardt.

Officers met with the alleged victim and were driving him to the robbery scene when he saw 19-year-old Raekwon Meeks coming out of an alley near Howard and Bell. The victim immediately recognized Meeks as the robber, Burkhardt said. Meeks pedaled away from officers on his bike and then jumped off and ran.

Police arrested him in the 7500 block of N. Ridge. Burkhardt said officers retraced the path of the foot chase and found a handgun with a sawed-off or missing barrel on the ground. The victim allegedly identified it as the weapon used in the robbery attempt.

Meeks, who is now charged with attempted robbery, is on juvenile parole for possessing a stolen motor vehicle, and he has a three-week-old felony drug case pending. Meeks' public defender said he has no children and is a church-goer.

"I'm just blown away, how many people go to church who's charged with all these violent offenses that come in front of me," Judge John

Lyke said after hearing the allegations against Meeks. "The churches I went to didn't talk about violence and what have you — basically stated not to do it."

"I'm not saying he did it all. I want the record to be crystal clear on that," Lyke added before ordering Meeks held without bail for violating the terms of bond in the pending drug case. Lyke set bail in the new case at \$10,000 and ordered Meeks to go onto electronic monitoring if he's released.

Idaho man arrested when gun falls from his clothes while filing a police report in River North

An Idaho man had a negative Chicago experience when his car was stolen in River North June 13. He had an even worse Chicago experience when a gun allegedly fell from his clothing while



Kamran Khademi

he rolled on the ground in a fit of histrionics as police tried to take his report.

Kamran Khademi, 34, is now charged with felony unlawful use of a weapon. And his car is gone.

Police initially responded to a call of a person with a gun in the 400 block of N. Wells around

4:15 a.m. June 13. But they didn't find anyone there. Around the same time, Khademi called 911 to report that his car had been stolen in the area, according to Assistant State's Attorney Brian Burkhardt.

Cops met with Khademi on the first block of W. Hubbard and were in the process of taking a report for his stolen car when the Idahoer laid down, grabbed his chest, and started rolling back and forth on the ground, Burkhardt said.

As police called for an ambulance, a pistol allegedly fell from Khademi and plunked onto the ground. Cops seized the weapon and found two loaded ammunition magazines in Khademi's left pants pocket, Burkhardt said.

CPD camera footage from the "person with a gun" call on Wells St. allegedly shows Khademi running after his stolen car with a firearm in his hand.

Khademi, who has no criminal background, was in Chicago to work, according to statements made during a bond court hearing Monday.

Judge John Lyke released Khademi on his own recognizance and gave him permission to return to Idaho while the case is pending. Khademi is due back in court on June 21.

Old Town burglaries

Police are warning residents of Old Town of recently reported burglary related incidents. In most incidents, the victims left their garage doors open or unlocked resulting in an offender entering and various properties being stolen.

Incidents include one on the 1300 block of N. Cleveland Ave., Monday, May 3, during the morning hours, and a second one on the 1400 block of N. North Park Ave., Thursday, May 6 in the morning hours.

Two shot while traveling in car near Oak St. Beach

Two men were shot, one fatally, while riding in a car on Lake Shore Dr. near Oak Street Beach, police said. A third person in the car was injured when their vehicle crashed into a light pole on the roadside.

Witnesses began reporting the car crash moments after officers stationed at the intersection of Michigan and Oak reported gunfire around 12:43 a.m. June 15. Cops found a silver Nissan Sentra that crashed into a pole while traveling northbound on the 1100 block of N. Lake Shore Dr., according to a CPD statement.

The 32-year-old male driver was later pronounced dead at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center with two gunshot wounds to his torso.

A 20-year-old male passenger in the car suffered two gunshot wounds to his arm. His condition stabilized at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, police said. A 25-year-old male passenger who suffered minor injuries from the crash was listed in good condition at an unidentified hospital.

Police said no one is in custody for the shooting. It was not clear where the gunfire came from.

CPD surveillance camera operators saw three people run from near the crash scene and cross into the Gold Coast neighborhood, where at least one of them changed clothing. Police later

detained two of those individuals, but it's not clear if they were involved in the shooting. Both of the detainees were taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital with unspecified injuries. Area Three detectives are investigating.

Burglar is targeting ground-floor apartments on North Side

Police are warning about a burglar who is crawling through ground-floor apartment windows in Lincoln Park and Lakeview.

The prowler has struck twice this month, police said in a community alert: in the 2600 block of N. Sheffield on the night of June 8-9 and in the 1600 block of W. Roscoe on the night of June 11-12.

Police said the offender used force to gain access in one case. He takes valuables from inside the home and then flees, the alert said.

Detectives are urging residents to make sure security and video systems are working properly and to pay special attention to suspicious people around the area.

Anyone with information about break-ins can contact Area Three detectives at 312-744-8263 about cases JE-259217 and JE-263164.

Armed men rob an entire family near Magnificent Mile; Group has struck many times this week

Armed men who robbed a family that was walking in Streeterville on June 15 are suspected of committing several similar crimes downtown, in the South Loop, in Old Town, and elsewhere. No arrests have been made, and the offenders are apparently not afraid to target multiple people simultaneously.

At 10:44 p.m. June 15, a 48-year-old man was walking with his family on the 100 block of E. Grand when a black car pulled up and four men got out — three armed with handguns. The offenders then robbed the family of four phones, four wallets, electronics, and jewelry, according to a CPD report. Then, the crew drove away.

Around the same time, another victim reported being robbed by three men who got out of a black car on the 200 block of E. Superior. One of the robbers displayed a handgun.

About 30 minutes before the two Streeterville robberies unfolded, a man was robbed by two gunmen who emerged from a black car at 21 E. Cullerton in the South Loop.

Police believe all three robberies and at least three others reported elsewhere in the city were committed by the same group of men who were using a black Honda Civic bearing a license plate beginning with BY503, according to a source. The Honda is stolen.

The offenders have consistently been described as Black men in their teens or early 20's who wear all black clothing and black masks.

Among other recent robberies that may be linked to the same crew: At 12:20 a.m. June 14, three 19-year-old men told police they were walking on the 100 block of W. Goethe in Old Town when two men got out of a black Porsche Cayenne and approached them with handguns, according to a CPD spokesperson. The offenders took the victims' wallets and phones, then fled westbound on Goethe in the Porsche.

At 12:10 a.m. June 15, a man was pistol-whipped and robbed by four offenders who got out of a red Acura MDX on the 1400 block of S. Wabash in the South Loop. An ambulance treated the victim for injuries.

Area Three detectives are heading up the investigations.

Man critically wounded in Near North Side drive-by shooting

A 42-year-old man was critically injured in a drive-by shooting on the Near North Side June 18, police said. No arrests have been made.

The victim was walking in the 900 block of N. Cambridge when someone began firing at him from a black sedan around 1:29 a.m., according to a CPD statement. Bullets struck the man in his abdomen and left leg. He was taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital for treatment.

Witnesses saw the black car drive southbound on Cambridge after the shooting. Police found two shell casings at the scene. Area Three detectives are investigating.

Friday's shooting is the second this month on a two-block stretch of Cambridge Ave.

Around 1:30 a.m. June 5, a 31-year-old man

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Men shot in River North, Goose Island, and near Lincoln Park Zoo

BY CWBCHICAGO

Three people were shot in separate incidents June 19 and 20 in River North, near Lincoln Park Zoo, and in the Goose Island neighborhood. No arrests have been made.

In the River North shooting, witnesses approached officers who were handling a separate incident to report that a person was shot inside a parking garage at 401 N. State St. around 1:50 a.m.

Officers found a 30-year-old man with a gunshot wound to his right thigh inside the structure, police said. The victim said he was walking through the garage when several men approached him and fired shots, according to a CPD statement.

An ambulance took the man to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in fair condition.

Investigators found four shell casings, clothing, and two phones at the crime scene.

In the Lincoln Park shooting, police said a 20-year-old man was shot while driving past the Lincoln Park Zoo around 8:45 p.m. The man was driving his Kia Soul on the 2300 block of N. Stockton when a man who was on foot fired several shots, according to police.

One round grazed the victim's torso. He drove himself to AMITA St. Joseph Hospital, where he was listed in good condition.

In the Goose Island shooting a 27-year-old man was critically wounded in a shooting near Stanton

Park in the Goose Island neighborhood, police said. No arrests have been made.

The victim was on the 700 block of W. Evergreen in a parking lot adjacent to the park when a man got out of a gray car and shot at him around 6:15 p.m., according to a CPD report. The gunman then returned to his car and left the area.

Bullets struck the victim in his arm, leg, and groin, police said. He was taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Surveillance video shows two vehicles, a silver Porsche Cayenne and a silver Chevy Tahoe, apparently traveling together before and after the shooting, the CPD report said.

POLICE BEAT from p. 6

was shot in the hip a block south of Friday's shooting scene. Police said that victim, who has a history of contact with CPD, did not cooperate with investigators.

Man shot, critically wounded during Gold Coast carjacking attempt

Carjackers shot and critically wounded a 35-year-old man as they tried to take his Jeep Trailhawk in the Gold Coast on June 17, police said. No arrests have been made.

The victim, who lives in River North, was standing with his girlfriend at 21 E. Chestnut at 10:21 p.m. when a man demanded the keys to the Jeep at gunpoint. Police said the offender then fired one round, striking the victim in his neck. The carjacker then returned to the SUV he arrived in and fled the scene, according to a police statement.

Surveillance video shows two offenders getting out of a silver Honda Pilot driven by a third person before the hijacking attempt. Both men ran back to the same car, a stolen car, after the shooting.

An ambulance transported the victim to Northwestern Memorial Hospital where he was taken to surgery.

Carjacking reports continue to outpace the record numbers seen in 2020. Among the most recent cases is an armed hijacking in the South Loop around 2:55 a.m. June 17. In that case, carjackers got away with a man's Mercedes AMG GT63 — a car that retails for over \$150,000.

The victim told police that three men, all armed with handguns, commandeered his car on the 1900 block of S. Wabash.

Minutes before the crew got away with the victim's Mercedes, they apparently tried to carjack an Uber driver outside a luxury apartment building on the 1300 block of S. Michigan. That attempt failed, but the Uber driver flagged down police to tell them about it moments before the second hijacking unfolded.

Woman sexually assaulted in Lakeview East

A woman was sexually assaulted June 14 by a man who approached her as she walked in the Lakeview East neighborhood, police said. The victim, age 22, was walking in the 600 block of W. Wellington when the offender struck up a conversation between 2:30 and 3 a.m., according to a community alert from Area Three detectives.

Police said the man took the woman into a "dirt lot" and sexually assaulted her. The woman fought with the man,

who reportedly ran westbound on Wellington.

An ambulance transported the woman to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center for treatment. In addition to being sexually assaulted, the woman had injuries to her eye, according to a CPD report.

Police said the suspect is a Black male in his 20's who stands 5'-6" to 5'-7" tall and weighs 160 to 170 lbs. He has short black hair and was wearing all dark clothing.

Anyone with information about the attack can contact detectives at 312-744-8200 about case #JE-265129.

Monday's attack is similar in some ways to a May 17 sexual assault in Ravenswood. In that case, an 18-year-old woman was sexually assaulted after a man lured her into a construction site as she walked in the 4800 block of N. Ravenswood between 6:45 p.m. and 7 p.m.

But the suspect description in the earlier case is much different: a Black male with shoulder-length dreadlocks who's about 27-years-old, 6'-3" tall, and 190 lbs. He was wearing a red t-shirt, black pants, and a black paisley bandana as a facemask. He also carried a black duffle bag across his body, police said.

Area Three detectives are also investigating the May attack, which is recorded under case #JE-233594.

Rash of armed robberies

Police are warning citizens of multiple similar robbery incidents which occurred during the evening/early morning hours in the month of June. In each instance, multiple offenders approach the victims, display handguns, and take possession of the victims' property after threatening use of force.

Incidents include one on the 1900 block of N. Hudson Ave. on 9 10 p.m. June 3; 100 block of E. Grand Ave. 2:45 a.m. June 4; 100 block of W. North Ave. 3 a.m. June 4; 1600 block of N. Throop St. 3:12 a.m. June 4; 1600 block of W. Belmont Ave. 3:20 a.m. June 4; 1600 block of W. Irving Park Rd. 3:30 a.m. June 4; 4800 block of N. Western Ave. 3:44 a.m. June 4; 1800 block of W. Peterson Ave. 3:50 a.m. June 4; 200 block of E. Lower Illinois St. 6:15 a.m. June 4; 300 block of E. Ohio St. 6:20 a.m. June 4; 200 block of E. Superior St. 10:40 p.m. June 15, and on the 100 block of E. Grand Ave 10:44 p.m. June 15.

The offenders are described as 4-8 Black males, 15-20 years of age, armed with handguns, wearing dark hooded sweatshirts and masks. Anyone with information on these crimes may contact the Bureau of Detectives Area 3 Detective Division at 312-744-8263.

Armed carjackers take SUV in the Loop

An armed man battered and carjacked a 32-year-old driver in the Loop June 20 as hijacking reports continue to increase in the city.

Several offenders approached the driver as he got out of his Volkswagen Atlas on the first block of East 9th St. around 6:29 p.m., police said. One of the hijackers displayed a gun, hit the victim in the neck, and demanded the keys to the car, according to police.

The victim, who lives in Rogers Park, complied.

Police said the offenders climbed into the man's SUV and headed west on 9th St. A license plate reader detected the stolen car traveling outbound on the Dan Ryan at 51st St. a short time later.

The victim's neck was bruised, but he declined medical attention, police said. He described the carjackers as three Black male teenagers, one of whom wore a red hoodie.

On June 29, a 47-year-old delivery driver was hit in the head, knocked to the ground, and carjacked in Old Town, according to CPD. Police said the man was making a food delivery in the 1500 block of N. Wells around 8:25 p.m. when the offender punched him in the back of the head, knocking him to the ground.

The hijacker jumped into the man's red 2014 Mazda 3 and drove away southbound. He was later seen turning west on Chicago Ave. from Franklin, police said. The victim suffered minor injuries but declined medical attention.

On June 17, Ald. Michele Smith (43rd), who represents much of Old Town, said in an email newsletter, "carjacking is still a serious issue in our city, but numbers are significantly down since the carjacking task force was enlarged in March."

In fact, carjackings have increased every month since March, according to the city's data. There were 83 hijackings citywide that month, 98 in April, and 111 in May. Through June 12, this month was on-pace to record 120 cases.

—Compiled by CWBChicago.com



A police officer detains Darryl Sprowal on June 15.

Twice-convicted sex offender tried to sexually assault sunbather in park

BY CWBCHICAGO

Prosecutors on June 17 charged a twice-convicted sex offender with trying to sexually assault a woman who was sunbathing this week in a park adjacent to the 606 trail in Bucktown.

The 45-year-old woman was wearing a bathing suit and lying face-down in Churchill Field Playlot Park, 1825 N. Damen, when Darryl Sprowal 41, walked up around 1:30 p.m. June 15, according to police and prosecutors.

Sprowal moved his hands to his groin area while standing within feet of the woman, who has never had contact with him before, Assistant State's Attorney Kevin Deboni said. The woman reportedly looked over at Sprowal and asked if she could help him with something.

Suddenly, Sprowal jumped onto the woman's back and began grabbing her face as if to cover her mouth, Deboni said. The woman screamed, attracting the attention of two men in the area. They both intervened.

As Sprowal got up, he said he "didn't do anything" and "it wasn't what it looked like," Deboni said. He then walked away on Damen Ave.

A third witness took video and photos of Sprowal as others called 911. Police searched the area and found Sprowal in the 2000 block of W. McLean around 2:22 p.m.

The alleged victim identified him as the man who attacked her and Sprowal told police that he "tripped and fell" on the woman, Deboni said.

Sprowal received a six-year prison sentence in 2016 for attempted criminal sexual assault. In that case, he was accused of forcefully grabbing a woman he didn't know, pulling her legs apart, and positioning himself between them. He was supposed to register his address as a sex offender by March 8, but he never did, Deboni said. Sprowal told investigators who handled the case that he "gets urges to have sex." In 2005, Sprowal received a nine-year sentence for sexually assaulting his 72-year-old grandmother, Deboni said. He also served five years in Texas for a burglary that involved a 13-year-old victim.

Prosecutors charged him with attempted criminal sexual assault, aggravated battery in a public place, unlawful restraint, being a sexual predator in a public park, and violating the sex offender registry act.

His defense attorney said Sprowal has been homeless since March and has one child who is now an adult.

Judge Mary Marubio noted the "impulsive nature" of the new allegations and set bail for Sprowal at \$250,000, meaning he will need to post \$25,000 to get out of jail.

Criminals are crawling down bridges to burglarize riverfront restaurants

BY CWBCHICAGO

hours of June 2 and June 18.

Never let it be said that Chicago's creative criminal element won't take advantage of every opportunity.

Police last weekend warned Loop businesses that burglars are crawling down the side of a Chicago River bridge structure to burglarize a riverside restaurant via its scenic waterfront patio entrance.

CPD did not identify the restaurant, but they said the burglaries took place on the 100 block of N. Wacker Dr. during the overnight

In both cases, male and female burglars eased their way down the side of one of the city's famed bascule bridges and jumped onto the restaurant's riverfront patio. From there, the prowlers entered the eatery and took unspecified property.

Police described the burglars only as males and females between the ages of 18 and 24.

Anyone with information about case can contact Area Three detectives at 312-744-8263 regarding alert #P21-3-077.

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Now you can stream New Faces Sing Broadway

Porchlight Music Theatre announced streaming dates for its first live, in-person production of 2021, *New Faces Sing Broadway 1979*, with host multi-award winner Alexis J Roston* and a slate of up and coming talents celebrating the 1979 Broadway season, directed by Brianna Berger* and music directed by Linda Madonia*. *New Faces Sing Broadway 1979* is available for streaming Friday, June 25 beginning at 12 p.m. CDT through Sunday, July 25 at 11:59 p.m. CDT. Tickets are \$25 - \$50, with streaming available for 72 hours after purchase, and are on sale now. For more information, visit PorchlightMusicTheatre.org or call the Porchlight Music Theatre box office at 773-777-9884.

The *New Faces Sing Broadway 1979* performance was recorded in front of a live audience Saturday, June 12 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie's Out Back Summer Sessions. Host Alexis J Roston and the *New Faces*, a cast made up of the next generation of talent, take the audience on a musical journey from the start to the finish of the 1979 Broadway season in 90 minutes with songs, historic information, trivia and sing-alongs. The latest *New Faces* features songs from the 1979 Broadway shows *Evita*, *Sweeney Todd*, *They're Playing Our Song* and more.

The 1979 cast of *New Faces* include Michah Beauvais, Adia Bell, Chloe Belongilot, Wesley Anthony Clergé, Haley Gustafson, Drew Mitchell, Mia Nevarez, Laura Quiñones, Christopher Ratliff and Nathe Rowbotham. The musicians performing with the *New Faces* include Linda Madonia (music director, keyboards), MarcelReimão Bonfim (bass) and Justin Akira Kono (drums).



Ethan Dooley with Chicago Rowing Foundation and teammates.

TAXI from p. 2

Also saw **Eamonn Cummins** and **Jennifer Bender**. Bravo to the organizers for their hard work.

PAWS: A most successful event for PAWS Chicago Golf Outing at Westmoreland Country Club, with **Judith Spurlock** and husband **Jim** joining **Ross** and **Suzie Glickman**, **Judith Tullman** and **Howard Tullman**, **Ramona Griffin**, **Nancy Sterling**, **Judith Goldberg** and **Bill**.

CHICAGO ROWING: A great weekend for young rower **Ethan Dooley** and his teammates who finished 7th at the Chicago Rowing Foundation's V8 by winning the B Final race in Sarasota FL. Papa **Ken Dooley** and Mama **Dana Librot Dooley** are aglow.



Paul Iacono and Jennifer Sutton Brieve.

WHO'S WHERE: **Chauwarin Tuntisak**, partner of **Doug Van Tress**, honored by Cook County Treasurer, **Maria Pappas** along with select Chicago Thais for their community service and charitable work... Fans of fine artist and waiter **Peter Axelsen** of Ralph Lauren Bar & Grill celebrated his birthday last week with the usual relish... **Stacie McClane** and **Sherry Lea Fox** looking fab, eating well at Maple & Ash... **Janet** and **Rodger Owens** filling their sails for **Susan Hand**, **Michael Mandic** and **Christina Hand Mandic** on the waters of Lake Michigan... **Chadwick Godfrey**, a man in the know, eschewed a journey by plane and made a most reviving 19-hour Amtrak trip instead ... **Chase Michels** with **Shelley McArthur Farley**, **Sauna Montgomery**, **Liam Farley**, **Calli Michels Rummel**, **Patti Michels**, **Lauren Gottsacker** and **Jared Rummel** doing a wedding in Medford, NJ... Back at Wrigley with **'Da' Borgs** at **'Da' Cubs**... Peach vs Pistachio contest in Wilmette at



Golfing for PAWS with Judith Spurlock and husband Jim joining Ross and Suzie Glickman, Judith Tullman and Howard Tullman, Ramona Griffin, Nancy Sterling, Judith Goldberg and Bill.

Homer's famed ice cream parlor for **Jeff** and **Stephanie Leese Emrich**, it was a draw... the **Samurai Brothers** enjoying a bucolic summer in adventure rich Michigan... **Ingrid McNeil** came for cocktails with **Jim Kinney** and **Brian White** on the roof... my very favorite sweetie, **Lynn Graham**, lunching with her cousin **Michael Rambert** in The Booth ... nearby

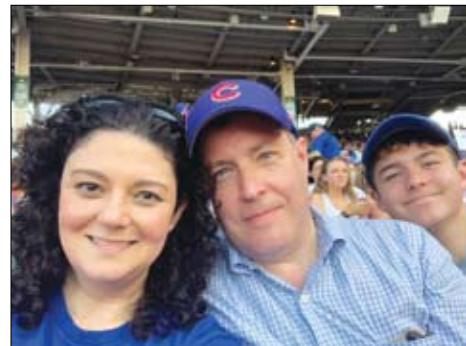
Christie Heffner having lunch... Chicago restaurateur 'supremo' **Steve Lombardo** giving an RL tour... **Susie Fortsmann Kealy** with grandson **Trip Arnold** at his Hardy Prep graduation... TV's **Whitney Reynolds** seen garden supply shopping at Home Depot on Elston... **Chuck Jordan** and "scoopster" **Candace Jordan** having dinner dee-lish at Erie Cafe... Architectural guru **Lee Bey** so proud of his youngest daughter, **Sara Bey**, who's writing for Hearst Publishing while in college... Congrats to critic supreme and bride, **Mr. and Mrs. Sherman Kaplan** for 59 years of marriage... **Shelley Howard** and rock star **Billy Jacobs** on Rush St.

SKYLINE VIET NAM: **Rodney Alex** writes from Viet Nam: "Thanks for including me in Skyline as I wait restlessly to be released from my three star quarantine here in Ho Chi Minh City. 11 days down, 10 more to go." Good luck, Rodney.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT... OMG: **Paul Iacono** and **Jennifer Sutton Brieve** "re-aired" this past week with their appearance on **Drew Carey's** game show the Price is Right. It never gets old.

Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all. -- Sam Ewing

tog515@gmail.com



'Da' Borgs at 'Da' Cubs.



Whitney Reynolds



Billy Jacobs and Shelley Howard.

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Illinois Medicaid companies rake in record profits from pandemic

The BGA reveals how the five private insurance companies running the state's healthcare program for low-income residents benefited from the COVID-19 lockdown

BY DAVID JACKSON
Better Government Assoc.

The for-profit insurance companies running Illinois Medicaid collected hundreds of millions of dollars in extra profits during the COVID-19 pandemic — much of it for services never provided to patients, an investigation by the Better Government Association has found.

The windfall was the result of a payment system based on annual, per-patient estimates. While the number of patients in the state's Medicaid program swelled as people lost their jobs, many deferred elective medical procedures during the pandemic.

That meant the insurance companies spent a smaller percentage of their government revenue on direct medical services, a trend seen nationwide in which Medicaid providers made billions in extra profits.

An analysis of the quarterly and year-end financial statements of Illinois' five Medicaid insurance

contractors — called managed care organizations [MCO] reveals the unprecedented surge in profits from April 2020 through Dec. 2020. The Illinois COVID-19 lockdown began in March when Gov. J.B. Pritzker issued executive orders closing schools and some businesses.

Three of the Medicaid companies — Meridian Health Plan of Illinois, IlliniCare Health Plan and Molina Healthcare of Illinois — reported a combined \$282 million increase in profits in Illinois during that nine-month stretch when the pandemic was at its height, compared to the same period in 2019.

The other contractors — insurance giant Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois and Aetna Better Health of Illinois, Inc. — also reported large profits on a national scale, but the direct correlation is unclear because their figures include private patients, Medicare recipients or data from other states.

The parent company of Illinois' Blue Cross — which covers the insurance carrier over five states — reported its net income from all private and public plans rose by 75% to nearly \$4 billion last year, records show.

Presented with the BGA's find-

ings, the top official at the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services said her office will investigate and work to recover some of the taxpayer money as part of a routine statewide accounting due in 2023.

"I don't think it is fair to take a partial-year look or a short-term look at something when all these numbers and all these projections are annual in nature, and there's still a lot of billings and reporting and reconciling to do," said Theresa Eagleson, director of HFS in an April interview with the BGA.

"If those numbers for calendar year 2020 end up bearing out, we will be recouping a significant amount of money from the plans," Eagleson said. "I'm not saying that we don't see this potentially occurring. I'm saying we don't have a process in place to recoup it until ... all the information is in."

In a followup email earlier this month, Eagleson's top spokeswoman said, "purely as a snapshot in time, initial incomplete figures indicate HFS would recoup over \$120 million" from the insurance firms for calendar year 2020. Those funds will come through a program called a "risk corridor" that reallocates money if the companies exceed or fall short of

targets for medical care.

"Illinois was one of the first states in the country to implement risk corridors during the pandemic to further restrict possible profit margins," said Jamie Munks, Eagleson's spokeswoman. "We will recoup more from the health plans than we otherwise would have."

The prospect of waiting two years for payback isn't fast enough for some state lawmakers. State Sen. Dave Koehler, a Democrat from Peoria, in December filed a bill to "claw back" 20% of all COVID-era profits from the Medicaid providers.

"Our two hospital systems here in Peoria verified that their revenues were down during the height of the pandemic because everybody was not doing electives," Koehler, an assistant majority leader, told the BGA. "That bothers me."

When his bill wasn't progressing to a floor vote, Koehler said he met for 45 minutes with Pritzker in March and made his case to recover 20% of the excess profits now.

"I said, 'We don't really have a managed care system in this state; we have a managed payment system. ... There is no care,'" Koehler said he told Pritzker.

Koehler declined to discuss how Pritzker responded.

Email traffic obtained by the BGA through a public records request suggests the Pritzker administration had already decided to scuttle Koehler's efforts.

"The governor's office also has many concerns with the (bill) language," wrote Samantha Olds Frey, the state's top Medicaid insurance lobbyist, in an email to company leaders Jan. 5. "They asked that I send over our high level list of concerns, so they can review them and include them in their analysis."

"We are also working with HFS and our communications team to push back with the press," Olds Frey wrote in a separate email to industry executives.

The emails illustrate the influence Medicaid contractors exert over Illinois agencies tasked with holding the insurance firms accountable for patient care and taxpayer savings, according to ethics and industry experts.

"It doesn't seem to be just or fair to the taxpayers of Illinois that these billions of dollars in payments would continue to flow to the MCOs during a time when they're not providing the services

MEDICAID see p. 10

CABRINI from p. 4

city council.

"CHA and the city, along with its development partners, have worked to realize the goals of the redevelopment plan to create a vibrant, mixed-income community," said CHA spokeswoman Karen Vaughan. "The availability of TIF funds will ensure that this work continues. The TIF funds are a vital funding source needed to complete the revitalization of the Near North community area. The CHA and the city remain committed to the community and residents as we continue working to meet the redevelopment obligation."

The empty CHA land was part of the Cabrini-Green footprint, including namesakes William Green Homes and a series of red-brick buildings known as Cabrini Extension South, named for a Catholic missionary. Also waiting to be modernized are the historic Frances Cabrini Rowhouses, which were built in the 1940s for returning war veterans.

The grand vision to transform the neighborhood has been riddled with problems from the beginning. The project has progressed in fits and starts because of economic downturns, lawsuits and funding issues.

The redevelopment began in the 1990s, but construction halted as the city, the CHA and public housing residents battled in the courts. They came to an agreement in 2000, with the CHA agreeing to build 700 units of public housing, and the city agreeing to create 270 units of affordable housing. In 2015, the CHA agreed to increase the number of public housing units to 1,800. The agency still remains 580 units short of that goal.

Last year, the city council approved spending up to \$4 million in TIF funds to demolish the vacant Near North high school to make way for the first phase of redevelopment there, a high-rise with about 190 units of mixed-income housing.

As projects are completed and property values rise, the district increasingly generates more taxes. Over the last two decades, it produced more than \$320 million. If extended, the city expects it will create about \$600 million more over the next 12 years.

So far, about \$50 million went to the developers of mixed-income housing, who have created more than 1,000 units, records show. The developments are called mixed income because about a quarter of the homes were set aside for public housing residents, 20% have income caps, and the rest are rented or sold at market rates.

The Cabrini-Green redevelopment was initially set to be completed in 2010, but the 2008 housing market crash delayed projects. When one of the developers couldn't make its sales quotas, the CHA and the city bailed it out and kept a bank from auctioning off units.

The city spent about \$30 million in TIF funds to redevelop neighborhood schools and more than \$13 million to expand and improve area parks and help finance the construction of a field house that bears the name of Secretary of State Jesse White. In recent years, the city also has tapped millions in TIF funds to help plug city budget holes.

The Cabrini-Green redevelopment was initially set to be completed in 2010, but the 2008 housing market crash delayed projects. When one of the developers couldn't make its sales quotas,

the CHA and the city bailed it out and kept a bank from auctioning off units.

That developer, the Holsten Real Estate Development Corp., is now completing the final rental phase of the Parkside of Old Town redevelopment, which will deliver 102 units. About a third of those units will be reserved for public housing residents, a third have income caps, and a third can be rented at market rates. The \$50 million project, or nearly \$500,000 per unit, includes \$9.5 million in Near North TIF money.

Some experts said the area supports expensive housing because of its location. The redevelopment of the Near North TIF, along with the displacement of public housing residents throughout the city

as the CHA moved toward privatization, helped cement the city's segregated lines, as many displaced public housing residents, who were almost all Black, were forced into disinvested areas on the city's South and West Sides, where TIF districts are far less lucrative for developers.

"TIF has never worked well with equity and need," said Rachel Weber, a professor of urban planning at the Univ. of Illinois at Chicago. "It is not conducive to encouraging equitable development."

The report from the city's DPD doesn't specifically say what future projects would be financed with the additional TIF dollars. It said the TIF extension is needed to fulfill the CHA's "vision of creating diverse mixed-income communities."



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Small repairs for seniors offered

Northside Community Resources [NCR], 1530 W. Morse Ave., is offering small accessibility repairs for seniors [SARFS] to help people live independently and remain in their communities by providing essential safety modifications and repairs to their homes.

The SARFS program provides safety, security, and accessibility improvements and repairs that may include grab bars, lever faucets, door repairs, floor repairs, bathroom repairs, kitchen repairs, and carbon monoxide detectors.

Over half of adults age 70-plus take serious falls in their homes, but many of those falls can be avoided through preventive measures. Residents may live in single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums or even apartments to qualify for SARFS. Specific eligibility requirements apply with regard to income, personal assets, ownership and property configuration. Licensed and bonded contractors and workers supervise and perform all work.

Currently, the NCR SARFS program serves Chicago wards 39, 40, 46, 47, 48, 49 and 50. The program is funded by the City of Chicago's Dept. of Planning and Development through the US Dept. of Housing's Community Development Block Grant.

For more information contact Violet Espinoza at 773-338-7722 ext. 21, or write to violet@northsidecr.com for more information.

New high-rise at 3660 N. Lake Shore Dr. one step closer to reality

Lakeview appears to be set for adding another high-rise to Lake Shore Dr. on the North Lakefront.

During a virtual meeting June 17, the 46th Ward Zoning and Development Committee met with members of the community and approved a zoning change for City Club Apartments [CCA]. That sets in motion allowing construction of a new residential rental / mixed-use complex for 3636 N. Lake Shore Dr., at the corner of Lake Shore Dr. and Waveland Ave.

The final committee vote was 25 in favor, two against, and five abstentions.

The developer had been meeting with nearby residents since mid-2019 to sell their proposal and get the needed zoning change.

The site is directly adjacent to The New York Private Residences, 3660 N. Lake Shore Dr., and CCA plans to put up a modern glass and steel structure adjacent to the brick-high rise next door.

The planned complex would include two residential buildings connected by a one-story building. The building to the south is planned to be six stories tall, with 147 units. The one to the north is planned to be 19-stories and 228'-tall, with 187 units. Some 170 underground parking spaces would be included.

The plan calls for reconfiguring the



The 46th Ward Zoning and Development Committee met and approved a zoning change for City Club Apartments, 3636 N. Lake Shore Dr., that will be built at the corner of Lake Shore Dr. and Waveland Ave.

restaurant space is planned for the corner of Lake Shore Dr. and Waveland.

Development of this prime two-acre lot in front of The New York Private Residences has been sought for decades.

The developer of the New York, Louis Silverman, envisioned a twin to the 47-story original building on the site, along with 46 townhomes and a 50,000 square foot retail and recreational complex. He planned for construction of the 600-unit building to begin in 1990. Since then a series of developers have proposed projects for the site that never came to fruition.

The new building would offer a mix of sizes divided among studios, and one-, two-, and three-bedroom units.

Next CCA must obtain the approval of the Chicago Plan Commission, Committee on Zoning, and City Council before ground can be broken.

current driveway for use by both this new building and the 3660 building.

Four townhomes would be built into the taller building, facing Waveland Ave., encompassing the first and second floors. A

ROGUE from p. 1

ed choosing to go with his personal opinion, which was the opposite of the NHBA Board's position.

After hearing of Alen's rogue vote, the NHBA board held an emergency meeting and drafted a letter requesting its vote be changed, and the record amended to reflect the organization's intention to vote "yes" on the project.

If Ald. Cappleman follows up by approv-

ing the project based on the new vote in favor, it likely means the project goes forward, despite protests and backlash from area neighbors over how the process of community involvement was handled.

Allowing the building to go forward would have also included Lincoln Property Co. satisfying its affordability tax requirement with a \$3.1 million payment to Sarah's Circle so they could build their own housing facility in Uptown.

PROPERTY from p. 1

square footage and are assessed at \$17-18 in rent per square foot with 5% market vacancy. Estimated market values are \$75-\$120 per square foot.

Reports from the International Assoc. of Assessing Officers stated that commercial properties in Chicago were underassessed in 2018, which may have shifted some of the property tax burden from commercial properties to residential properties. The 2021 reassessments reflect current market data and commercial property's share of the market.

Property owners in Rogers Park Township can access all residential and commercial reports—including multi-family assessments, detailed studies of residential assessment quality, and commercial data sources and methodology—at <http://cook-countyassessor.com/rogers-park-2021>

Property assessments are used to apportion taxing district levies which pay for services such as schools, parks, libraries, and pensions. The Assessor does not set levies or tax rates. Also, increases in assessments do not necessarily increase the revenue received by taxing districts.

An increase in a property's assessment does not lead to the same increase in an individual property's tax bill. A property's share of taxes depends on reassessments throughout all of Chicago.

If the growth in assessed values elsewhere in Chicago outpaces the growth of an individual property's assessment, that individual property's share of property taxes could shrink despite its increase in property value. In 2018, properties in Rogers Park made up 2% of Chicago's total assessed value.

The 2021 assessments will affect the second installment property tax bill issued in late 2022.

Office re-opens for in-person appointments

Earlier this month the Cook County Assessor's Office resumed in-person visits by the public to its downtown and branch offices, in accordance with Cook County's reopening plan.

All in-person visits are by appointment only and will require a mask, physical distancing, and a health screening. These requirements apply to the downtown location as well as all branch offices.

"With reductions to Chicago's COVID numbers, we're able to resume in-person access to our office while keeping both staff and the public safe, said Assessor Fritz Kaegi. "During the entirety of the pandemic our office has continued to function remotely and offer exemplary customer service virtually and over the phone. Property owners should know they can continue to apply for many of our services online."

To schedule an appointment visit www.cookcountyassessor.com/appt, or call 312-443-7550.

To send a message visit www.cook-countyassessor.com/contact, or attend a workshop visit www.cookcountyassessor.com/event-list.

Appealing property assessments

If the property characteristics listed on an assessment notice are incorrect, or if the estimated market value of a property is significantly more than what it could sell for in the current real estate market, property owners should file an appeal.

Property owners are encouraged to use the Assessor's Office's new online system to file their appeals.

Appeals for Rogers Park can be filed until July 13. More information on filing appeals can be found at cookcountyassessor.com/appeals.

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