

The optimist sees a green near every sand trap; the pessimist sees a sand trap near every green.

— William Arthur Ward

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The former homeless tent camp at Legion Park moved into Ronan Park in March and the trouble it brought along has drawn the ire of local neighbors who feel the city is not dealing with vagrancy, nor doing enough to keep local parks open, free and safe.

Lawless homeless encampment in Ronan Park causing angst with neighbors

BY PAUL CHANCEY

Back when the nation was building the Transcontinental railroad, a phrase emerged to describe the community that rolled west alongside the rail workers: “Hell on wheels.” It referred to the mobile, lawless tent cities of saloons, brothels, and gambling dens that followed the Union Pacific Railroad workers laying the tracks in the 1860s.

Today there appears to be a similar ‘Hell under tents’ situation with homeless vagrants who move from site to site wearing out their welcome with local neighbors who have to witness their lawless and disturbing antics.

The most recent example moved into Ronan Park in March after a similar vagrant camp was cleared out of Legion Park. This new homeless camp is roiling residents just as the last one did. Nearby neighbors reached out to this newspaper to report on their bad experiences with homeless vagrants residing there who have literally broken every rule, and social mores in the book.

And as usual, and there has been no enforcement of Chicago Park District [CPD] rules on camping, or established curfews at the park, 3000 W. Argyle St.

Not only are the neighbors fed up, they are also scared for their safety. Many asked not to be identified by this newspaper, or identified by first name only. Indeed this newspaper has seen, and reported on, similar situations occurring at other North Side parks.

Nearby residents say that the Chicago police are advising them to “stay out of the park. It’s dangerous.”

Some of the residents spoke to this newspaper anonymously, sharing lurid stories about what’s occurring in the encampment, and expressing frustration with local leaders.

Residents have complained of package thefts, littering, loud noise and music, drug deals, violence, public drinking, prostitution, urination, defecation, indecent exposure and starting bonfires. They also believe that some of the criminal activity in the encampments is linked to drug cartels and street gangs like Latin Kings.

And city leaders and local non-profits have not done enough to mitigate the problems.

Not only are the neighbors fed up, they are also scared for their safety.

“I’m witnessing every single movement they’re doing,” said, “Amy,” who lives next to the park, and requested we only use her first name. “And it makes life for me very uncomfortable.”

The encampment arrived on March 19 after the one in Legion Park was cleared out after a fire. Amy described several incidents of lewd behavior and drug deals. In one incident, a man who doesn’t live in the encampment sold a bag full of what she described as “white powder.”

She believes the encampment is there because of the prime location. “They seem to stay along the river, because this area of the river is at least two miles long.”

Residents say that some individuals in the encampment have harassed them. One such resident told this reporter about how one member harassed his family when they sat at one of the public picnic tables. Another man would drink in public and threaten passers-by with a machete, while another man brandished a gun and threatened other encampment members.

Alleged drug deals also occur, even within view of area residents, according to one report on

LAWLESS see p. 12

Deadly shooting near Lincoln Park bar is second in a month for troubled nightlife strip

BY CWBCHICAGO

A man is in custody after a bar-goer was shot and killed Sunday night on a Lincoln Park nightlife strip, just steps from where a woman was shot last month, according to Chicago police.

Witnesses said they saw a group of people fighting as they poured out of a nightclub in the 2200 block of N. Lincoln Ave. around 11:43 p.m. July 19. As the brawl spilled into the street, witnesses said, at least one man pulled out a gun and opened fire.

Officers responding to 911 calls arrived quickly and found a 30-year-old man with multiple gunshot wounds lying in front of the Bank of America at 2240 N. Lincoln Ave. Officers admin-

istered CPR until paramedics arrived and took him to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, where he died a short time later, according to police.

Officers recovered one firearm at the scene and found about 12 shell casings near the victim, police said.

Witnesses told police that several men fled the area after the shooting, some on foot and others in a car. Officers took a 25-year-old man into custody after he returned to the scene around 12:25 a.m. Monday and was identified as a suspect. A second firearm was recovered from that man, according to officers at the scene. He has not been charged as of Monday morning.

A review of Cook County crim-

inal court records found no major local criminal matters in the adult backgrounds of either the victim or the man taken into custody.

The shooting happened just around the corner from where a 39-year-old woman was shot and critically injured early on June 7 after leaving a nightclub on Lincoln Ave. At the time, local residents raised concerns that the shooting was linked to the same club where witnesses said Sunday’s fight broke out before the shooting. No charges have been filed in the June shooting.

After the June shooting, Ald. Timmy Knudsen [43rd] told constituents in an email that it “was an isolated incident stemming

SHOOTING see p. 12

As mayor considers police funding cuts, Aldermen say he fails to collect revenue he doesn’t like

BY JIM TALAMONTI
The Center Square

Chicago aldermen are suggesting that the city has a projected budget gap of \$130 million because Mayor Brandon Johnson’s administration is failing to collect revenue for budget items it opposes. Meanwhile, Johnson’s administration is saying it may need to cut the city’s police budget to make ends meet.

The City Council Committee on Budget and Government Operations met on July 16 and discussed the administration’s projected deficit for this year, fueled in part by the failure to collect \$131.7 million in revenue projected from advertising, the sale of debt, augmented reality and video game licensing.

The four measures were not part

of Johnson’s budget proposal last fall, but aldermen included them in the \$16.7 billion spending plan they passed in December without the mayor’s signature. Earlier this month, Johnson blasted aldermen who backed the alternate budget and said enacting his proposal for a corporate head tax on employers would have prevented the shortfall.

A debt sale, projected to generate \$89.6 million, accounted for the largest piece of missing revenue. Several aldermen called out the mayor’s administration for failing to act on the issue. When questioned about video gaming by Ald. Debra Silverstein [50th], Chicago Budget Director Annette Guzman said the state has approved five video gaming licenses for the city.

“The \$6.8 million that you see

budgeted here was included in city council’s budget and is based on an assumption of 3,300 licenses being approved in one year by the state. That’s never happened in the history of the state,” Guzman said.

Silverstein expressed frustration with members of the administration, telling Guzman that “all of these [revenue] numbers that have zeroes by them are things that the mayor is opposed to.”

Ald. Anthony Beale [9th] asked Guzman who in Johnson’s administration was responsible for notifying the state that the city legalized video gaming terminals.

“Alderman, the state is processing licenses, so they’re aware,” Guzman said.

“They’re processing licenses,

CUTS see p. 12

\$202M in TIF funding proposed for Foundry Park

A \$201.6 million infrastructure financing proposal for the 31-acre Foundry Park mixed-use development site along the North Branch of the Chicago River was introduced to City Council July 15.

The money would come from taxpayer-funded Tax Increment Financing District [TIF].

Consisting of new public roadways, utilities and open space amenities near Southport Ave. and Cortland St., the improvements would help fund up to 3,737 mixed-income residences and 970,00 square feet of office, retail and hotel space within the \$3 billion Foundry Park project planned by JDL Development and Kayne Anderson.

The developer would be responsible for funding and complet-

ing construction of each public infrastructure component prior to being reimbursed by the City through incremental property tax growth within the Cortland and Chicago River TIF District.

Infrastructure costs proposed for TIF reimbursement include \$70.9 million for roadways and utility construction; \$69 million for new parks; \$33.5 million in river frontage improvements; \$21.5 million for a 606 Trail extension, and \$6.9 million for site prep and general expenses.

The site was formerly occupied by the A. Finkl & Sons steel buildings until they were sold and relocated in 2015. The vacant land is currently generating about \$1.5 million in annual property taxes.

As Foundry Park construc-

tion phases are completed, tax revenues are estimated at \$30.5 million in 2031 and \$68 million in 2036.

The approximately \$1 billion initial phase would start this fall with improvements to Kingsbury and Cortland streets, Southport Ave., 600 feet of riverwalk, and a “central square.”

Initial vertical development is planned to include three residential buildings with 709 mixed-income units, a 183-room hotel, and a 777-space underground parking garage.

A previous \$487.8 million public infrastructure plan with developer Sterling Bay died in March 2026 after the 55-acre Lincoln Yards project was taken back by their bank.

Weather has been behind many Chicago tales, tragedies



By Thomas J. O’Gorman

Chicago weather fixates our attention and gets us to take our eye off the prize. Whether that’s a doubleheader at Wrigley, Pope Leo praying his White Sox to a pennant, or the line up of oddball politicians looking to be our next mayor, or making our way through the BBQ smoke surrounding the United Center.

Nobody wants to head to the golf course, bike path or picnic grove when it’s 95 degrees and humid.

Weather is serious business in Chicago. Has been ever since Pere Marquette, S.J. and explorer Louis Jolliet spent the Christmas holiday camping along the banks of the Chicago River in 1673.

Our modern TV weather prognosticators have the fame of opera singers and mob bosses.

Chicagoans want to know if they’ll need galoshes and an umbrella.

Is it warm enough to get into a bikini? Will we need a sweater for Ravinia? Will the Cubs get rained out at Wrigley, or the Bears game snowed upon?

In the 1920s and 30s, before air conditioning, locals would go to movie houses that cooled their buildings with massive blocks of ice, fans blew cooled air over sweaty crowds.

It has been 31 years since the heatwave of July 1995 that lead to 739 heat-related deaths over a period of five days.

On the first day, Thursday, July 13, the temperature hit 106 degrees, and the heat index rose above 120. For a week, the heat persisted, running between the 90s and low 100s. The night temperatures, in the low to mid-80s.

The heat made the city’s roads buckle, and railroad train rails warp, causing long commuter and freight delays. City workers watered bridges to prevent them from locking when the plates expanded. Children riding in school buses became so dehydrated and nauseous, they needed to be hosed down by the Fire Dept. Hundreds of young people were hospitalized with heat-related illnesses.

But the elderly, and especially the elderly who lived alone, were most vulnerable to the heatwave. They made up most of the dead. Hundreds of those victims never made it to the hospital.

The Cook County Medical Examiners Office was where police transported hundreds of bodies for autopsies. The morgue typically receives about 17 bodies a day. Just three days into the heatwave, its capacity was exceeded by hundreds, and the county had to bring in a fleet of refrigerated trucks to store the bodies.

Police officers had to wait as long as three hours for a morgue worker to receive the body. It was gruesome and incredible for this to be happening in the middle of a modern American city.

But we mourned our losses, learned a lesson, and endured.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did a study of individual-level risk factors for heatwave victims, and came up with a list of conditions of vulnerability: living alone, not leaving home daily, lacking access to transportation, being sick or bedridden, not having social contacts nearby, and of course not having an air conditioner.

Preparation is essential for all types of weather when you live east of the Great Plains and beside a Great Lake. The collision of hot air blowing in from the west with

the cool lake can be spectacular and dangerous.

Every white-capped wave, frozen ice shelf, shift in the wind, every sparkling sunbeam becomes a barometer for social conditioning, parades, weddings, school picnics, Bar Mitzvahs, family reunions, and concerts in the park.

Chicago’s weather has surrounded great cultural and political successes. Some will remain on the history books for good. In Jan., 1979, Chicago remained firmly in the grip of the infamous Democratic Machine, when the Machine-backed Michael Bilandic was running for re-election. He was a shoo-in. No one beat the Daley Machine. Until 20-inches of snow fell, and kept falling in the weeks leading up to the Feb. 27, 1979 mayoral primary election.

Jane Byrne took that election due to the city’s weak response to the storm. That snow storm and its impact on the mayoral election is now legend, a cautionary tale told over and over by political operatives who remind their candidates that weather events can never be taken lightly by elected officials charged with keeping the city functional.

No Chicago heatwave was more tragic and life-altering for all residents at the time, than in the late Summer and early Autumn of 1871. It laid catastrophe at Chicago’s door. That’s when they had dozens of fires erupt across town as conditions just disintegrated from the heat and things took a climate-downturn of the worst proportions.

A day when the City’s ability to even get equipment to a fire became an impossibility. So no one was surprised in the City’s look-out tower to spot broken fire vehicles returning from one fire on Oct. 8, just as billows of black smoke began to rise in another fire just beginning.

Soon the fire spread, east and north of the river, it jumped over the flowing waters and connected the flaming South Side with the inferno on the North Side.

It didn’t take long for large mansions and farm houses to go up in fireballs. Soon cathedrals, hotels, banks, schools, department stores, fancy clubs, City Hall, railway stations, even old Fort Dearborn, fell to the intense heat and flames of what became known as the Chicago Fire of 1871.

Many Chicagoans rushed into the waters of Lake Michigan, warm as a bathtub, in an attempt to keep from burning to death. The settlement of Chicago had survived the Civil War, the epidemics of Cholera, Small Pox and Yellow Fever but were no match for the wild weather disaster of

Oct. 8 and 9. A two-day freak show. A low death toll, but massive destruction caused by weather. Memorialized on our Chicago flag with yet another star, lest we ever forget.

We’ve gotten better at predicting the weather in Chicago. Tornadoes still twist and turn. Harry Volkman, Tom Skilling, P.J. Hoff, John Coleman, Jerry Taft, Andy Avalos, Paul Konrad and many others became legendary meteorologists who taught Chicagoans how to sense and smell the weather as it slides along the prairie landscape.

They predicted the thunderstorms and blizzards that altered our scheduled living. They told us when schools closed and expressways shut down, and when it was time to grab a snow shovel. When swimming in the lake was dangerous, when ice was thin, or when we should stay inside. And when it was safe to go outdoors again.

Chicago’s weather connects us to a larger history of our town’s grand story, glueing us to monumental moments of history and cultural change.

LUNCH SCOOP: Pope Leo at lunch with 200 migrants, refugees and homeless people at Castel Gandolfo: “I came without a speech, but with hunger, with hunger for justice, with hunger for authentic charity, with hunger for a Church that truly knows how to open the doors, welcome, receive everyone, where there is love for all and where no one is an enemy.”

POPE LEOLAND ISLAND: Will the Pope be getting a hometown memorial in Lincoln Park? A Northerly Island name change? Let’s see what the City Council committee says.

TOLL: The Illinois Tollway board is considering the largest passenger toll hike in state history. Don’t worry, I was assured that our roadways would be “toll free by ’73.” Former Illinois Gov. **Bill Stratton** and other state lawmakers in the 1950s famously campaigned on the slogan, promising that the fees would only pay for the initial construction bonds and be removed once the roads were paid off. Still waiting...

EVICTON: Reserve, the South Loop eatery and drinkery at 744 S. Dearborn, in Printers Row, is facing eviction over alleged employee wage heft.

THE LOYALIST: Ask your phone who serves Chicago’s best hamburger and you will discover the Loyalist at 177 N. Ada, downstairs from Smyth Steakhouse. Burgers there are haute cuisine. Expensive but worth it. The pomme frites are extraordinary. The whole menu is fab, but devour the

burger. Even better with their vodka martini on the rocks with blue cheese olives. **Jorge** the waiter was fab for this writer’s party and the lovely people in line with me, **Mindy Moberg** and **Stacy Manzana**, who traded tables because of my trick knee.

MILWAUKEE AVE. NIGHTS: Plan for festive evenings on Milwaukee Ave. No end to food, drink and oddball ventures in Wicker Park. Or so oddball Ald. **Daniel La Spata** is advertising. The street festival returns July 24-26 on Milwaukee Ave.

CIAO: Daniela Cavallero and her cousin **Paola Nervi** recently opened L’Angolo Italiano at 1538 W. Jarvis Ave. in Rogers Park. What makes their concept unique is that L’Angolo Italiano is co-housed with Sentieri Italiani, the Italian language and cultural center founded in 1997. Together, they offer Chicagoans an immersive Italian experience where authentic regional cuisine, language classes, cultural events, travel programs, and community come together under one roof. Go visit and brush up on your Italian.

RAVINIA: The timeless North Shore arts venue has been spruced up and expanded with a larger stage, wider chairs, better acoustics and less seats for the peasants. We always took the fixins for fondue in the early 1970s and always ran out of flames.

REQUIEM: Mary Kathryn Hartigan 91, passed away on July 1. The Chicago-born **Carroll**, was an engaged resident of Kenilworth for more than 57 years, with a deep love for many Chicago cultural institutions. A distinguished member of a family focused on support for political, art-centered, social and cultural institutions. None more dear to her than Steppenwolf Theater, the

WEATHER see p. 8

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Video gambling applications, revenue fall far-short of projections

Burglaries of suburban, downstate video gambling parlors soaring

BY BOB ZULEY

Long before the Illinois General Assembly legalized the sale of the Illinois State Lottery in July 1974 offering the promises of riches to the masses, Chicagoans had the option of partaking in illegal policy, numbers, or bolita [alternatively boleta].

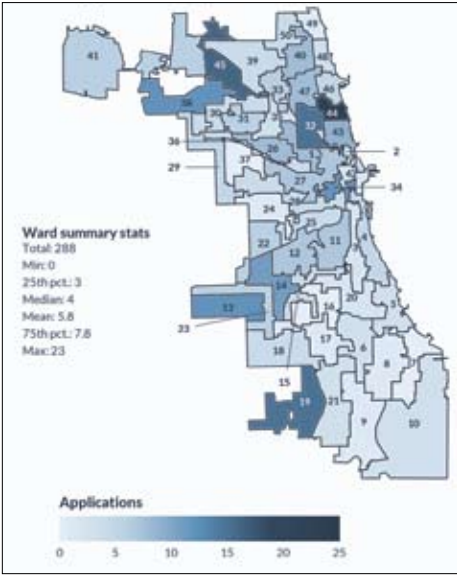
Rooted in Chicago’s Black belt and Latino communities, it involved players betting small amounts on daily number combinations typically determined by a policy wheel or by legitimate daily financial indicators, such as the last three digits of the daily Chicago Board of Trade clearings. This gambling represented a localized financial system and underground economy in heavily impoverished communities.

Because of the wealth generated by such policy operations, the Italian-American Chicago Outfit aggressively muscled their way in and took over these highly lucrative local operations using violent, coercive and exploitive means in the 1960s. Officials recognized that mob syndicates were draining wealth from low-income communities and pushed instead for a state-operated defraudment scheme known as the Illinois State Lottery.

Fifty-two years later, we have a battle of small neighborhood businesses seeking Video Gambling Terminals [VGT’s] versus Bally’s Corp., a global casino-entertainment corporation that made \$2.53 billion in 2024. The City of Chicago granted Bally’s the city’s sole casino license. And the Illinois General Assembly authorized Bally’s to install airport slot machines years ago – which Bally’s has not acted on.

Meanwhile, the City Council legalized VGT’s effectively throwing a lifeline to small businesses.

While Bally’s Chicago temporary



Total Video Gambling Applicants by Ward.
Courtesy Civic Data Atlas

casino hasn’t met revenue projections to date [bringing in just \$15.8 million in local tax revenue in 2025], it is hoping its new \$1.7 billion permanent casino in River West will dramatically boost its casino revenue operations.

According to data compiled from Civic Data Atlas, just 288 Chicago bars and restaurants have applied for VGT licensing from the state, while only six were approved on June 11. This is far short of projections behind the 2026 city budget that legalized VGT’s, under which 2,640 businesses were expected to apply and bring in \$6.8 million in VGT licensing fee revenue.

Even at the current pace, however, it would take years before the city reached the 2,640 establishments that the 2026 budget projected.

Based on average revenue from other Illinois terminals, the average establishment with VGT’s nets a profit of \$130,000 per year and pays \$20,000 in municipal taxes.

Ubiquitous gaming machines placed in

neighborhood bars and gas stations make problem gambling nearly impossible to avoid for those at risk. They are often specifically designed – with plush chairs and specific pacing – to encourage long, hypnotic play sessions.

Neighborhood gambling businesses often lack voluntary self-exclusion programs, meaning vulnerable individuals can easily lose their entire paychecks.

Rather than generating new-net-positive tax revenue for municipalities, gambling in local establishments often displaces money that would have been spent at other restaurants, retailers, or commercial ventures.

In Illinois, VGT gambling revenue from

Net Terminal Income [NTI] – the amount wagered minus player winnings – is strictly dictated by the state’s Video Gaming Act. The VGT business receives 33% of profits. The Terminal Operator receives 33%. And State and Municipal Taxes consume 33%.

The 44th Ward [Lakeview] currently leads in video gambling license applications among city wards with 23 applications received. The 32nd Ward has 15 applications filed while the 47th Ward has eight applications applied for. Three Wards have zero applications filed.

We can look to the city’s suburbs and

GAMBLING see p. 8

Your Property Index Number; What you need to know

BY MARIA PAPPAS

If you own property in Cook County, there’s one number you should always know: your PIN.



Maria Pappas

That’s short for Property Index Number—a 14-digit code assigned to every piece of real estate in the county. It’s tied to the legal description of your property and is used for assessments, tax rates, exemptions and collections. Whether you own a house, a vacant lot, a parking space or a condominium, your property has a PIN.

Think of it as the Social Security number for your home. And just like with your Social Security number, using the wrong one can cause major problems.

If you don’t pay on the right PIN—you haven’t paid your taxes. You’ve paid someone else’s. That means your property could be marked delinquent, and you might not even know it until it’s too late.

You can find your PIN on any property tax bill. If you recently bought your home or purchased it years ago, it should be on your deed. If it’s not on the deed, go to cookcountytreasurer.com, click the purple box and search by property address. You’ll see a photo of your property and your correct PIN.

Still think you don’t need to know your PIN? If your mortgage company pays your

taxes through an escrow account, you might assume everything is being handled. But double-check. Knowing your PIN allows you to verify that taxes are being paid in full, on time, and—most importantly—on the correct property.

In another scenario you might be sharing a PIN with other owners. That happens with newly built homes, condos or townhouses that haven’t yet been subdivided. If someone else with whom you share a PIN fails to pay their share, the whole PIN can go delinquent—and your property can be at risk even if you paid your entire portion.

If that’s the case, contact the Cook County Assessor’s Legal Department to find out how to make payments by legal description. Doing so ensures you’re only paying what you owe—and not footing the bill for a neighbor who has yet to pay.

You’ll also need your PIN if you want to:

- Request a duplicate tax bill
- Check for refunds or your exemption status
- Ask questions about your bill or payment history

And yes, PINs can change. When a property is split, combined or redeveloped, new PINs are assigned. That’s common with new construction, subdivisions and even converted parking spaces. If you just bought a new home or condo, it’s especially important to make sure you’re paying taxes on the correct—and current—PIN.

Bottom line: the PIN is the key to your property’s tax identity. Know it. Use it. And check it online because mistakes can happen, and the longer they’re left to fester, the more expensive they become.

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North Side sale dance: Buyers pay more, act quickly



The Home Front

by Don DeBat

Chicago's North Side home buyers will continue to pay more, and should "act quickly" this summer to grab their share of the American Dream.

That's the advice of 26-year veteran Baird & Warner real estate broker May Jo Nathan, author of the "Chicago North Side Market Report."

The exclusive survey analyzed second quarter April through June of 2026 single-family home and attached townhome and condominium sales in nine neighborhoods—Edgewater, Lake View, Lincoln Park, Lincoln Square, Near North Side, North Center, Rogers Park, Uptown and West Ridge.

"The competition for homes can be intense right now," noted Nathan, who is based in the Baird & Warner North Center office at 4037 N. Damen Ave. Nathan said she was recently involved in making an offer on a condominium that attracted 18 offers in all.

"Our offer was all-cash and well above the list price, and we still did not get the property," she revealed. "Fortunately, we were successful in another very competitive offer situation a few weeks later for an equally appealing unit. Especially for newly listed properties, this can be a brutally competitive environment for buyers."

Looking ahead, John Irwin, another Baird & Warner broker on the North Side, gave this forecast: "Inventory is expected to remain



Single-family home and attached townhome and condominium sales numbers for the second quarter of 2026 shows that in nine North Side neighborhoods sales softened but that competition for a dwindling number of listings still remains strong.



the primary factor influencing market performance in 2026." Unless listing activity increases meaningfully, the market should continue to favor sellers with stable pricing and continued competition for quality properties."

Second quarter 2026 sales report

Baird & Warner reported that second quarter 2026 sales activity in the North Side housing market softened slightly, as buyers faced intense competition for a dwindling number of listings.

Sales for the quarter totaled 2,724 properties, a dip of -3.7% from one year earlier, while the for-sale inventory fell -22.8% to only 1,125 properties. That is in sharp contrast to the 3,697 properties listed for sale at the end of just June five years ago.

At the same time, the median sales price for all North Side homes rose 6.4% for the April-June period to \$500,000, the highest quarterly median ever recorded in this market segment.

And, buyers were moving quickly to grab those properties that were available, with the average listing sold during the quarter going under contract in a rapid 38

days—down from 50 days a year ago.

Mortgage rates

On July 16, Freddie Mac's Primary Mortgage Market Survey reported that benchmark 30-year fixed home loans nationwide averaged 6.55% up from 6.49% a week earlier. A year ago, 30-year fixed rate loans averaged 6.75%.



Mary Jo Nathan

Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist, said: "Although purchase-application demand weakened recently, the backdrop for prospective home buyers is modestly improving."

Freddie Mac reported that rates on 15-year fixed mortgages averaged 5.93%, up from last week when it averaged 5.82%. A year ago, 15-year loans averaged 5.92%.

The survey is focused on conventional, conforming, fully amortizing home-purchase loans for borrowers who place a down payment of 20% and have excellent credit.

Single-family home

Baird & Warner said inventory issues continued to plague the North Side single-family home

market. Only a sparse 90 homes were listed for sale as of June 30 across the entire North Side market. That is -37.5% fewer than a year ago.

Nonetheless, sales held up surprisingly well, rising 2.2% from the same quarter last year, with 282 properties changing hands. The median sales price rose 15.4% to a quarterly record of \$1,702,500, which means half the homes sold were at that price or higher.

That is not only a record median sales figure for any quarter but represents an increase of 8.3% over the prior-high quarterly median, which occurred in the third quarter of 2025.

The time it took for homes sold during the quarter to go under contract was 45 days—16 days less than one year earlier. Sales rose in four of the nine North Side neighborhoods—Lake View, Lincoln Square, North Center and Near North/Gold Coast. Sales were unchanged in Rogers Park. Edgewater, Lincoln Park, Uptown and West Ridge posted sales declines.

Prices rise in hot areas

Eight neighborhoods posted an increase in median sales price, highlighted by gains of 62.5% in Uptown, 50.9% in Rogers Park, and 31.8% in Edgewater. Lake View, Lincoln Park, Lincoln Square, Near North/Gold Coast and West Ridge also had gains, while the median price fell -2.7% in North Center.

Sales of North Side attached homes—condos, townhomes and co-ops—fell by -4.4% for the second quarter on 2,442 transactions. However, the median sales price rose to \$450,000, which is also a quarterly record, topping the prior high set one year earlier by 4.7%.

Attached sales rose only in Lake View, up 6.4%, and North Center, up 3.3%. Declines ranged from a high of -37% in Lincoln

North Side Median Prices—second quarter 2026

	Median Price	% Change
Total North Side		
Detached	\$1,702,500	+15.4%
Attached	\$450,000	+4.7%
Edgewater		
Detached	\$1,212,500	+31.8%
Attached	\$289,000	-5.2%
Lake View		
Detached	\$2,075,000	+12.2%
Attached	\$515,000	+3.0%
Lincoln Park		
Detached	\$2,500,000	+5.0%
Attached	\$752,000	+13.2%
Lincoln Square		
Detached	\$1,275,000	+9.3%
Attached	\$438,000	+12.0%
Near North/Gold Coast		
Detached	\$2,365,000	+1.6%
Attached	\$467,500	+3.9%
North Center		
Detached	\$1,732,500	-2.7%
Attached	\$645,000	+15.2%
Rogers Park		
Detached	\$830,000	+50.9%
Attached	\$264,950	+15.2%
Uptown		
Detached	\$2,075,000	+62.5%
Attached	\$392,500	+11.0%
West Ridge		
Detached	\$607,500	+4.7%
Attached	\$225,000	+2.3%

Square to just -1.1% in Edgewater. Average time on the market was 37 days, down 12 days compared with the same quarter last year.

The median sales price for condos, townhomes and co-ops moved higher or was unchanged in eight of the nine North Side neighborhoods.

North Center led with a median price increase of 15.2%. Rogers Park posted a 13.2% gain, followed by 12% in both Lincoln Park and Lincoln Square. Median prices fell -5.2% in Edgewater.

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.

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County chief judge: 10% of electronic monitoring perps are AWOL, as high-profile violations continue to mount

BY CWBCHICAGO

A newly released report shows that 10% of the people enrolled in the Cook County court’s electronic monitoring [EM] program were missing as of June 1, the latest disclosure in what Chief Judge Charles Beach has described as a renewed transparency effort following the killing of an on-duty Chicago police officer and the critical wounding of his partner by an EM escapee in April.

But the program continues to be plagued by high-profile failures, including recent revelations that a 10-time felon who was supposed to be confined to his home while wearing an ankle monitor was found in Gov. JB Pritzker’s backyard. And another man, alleged by federal authorities to be a member of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, is charged with kidnapping and murdering an 18-year-old man while wearing one of the chief judge’s monitoring devices.

The Office of the Chief Judge’s [OCJ] latest report, released this week, is already six weeks old, reflecting the state of the monitoring program as of June 1, when

3,014 people were wearing ankle bracelets operated by Beach’s office. Of those participants, 303 were listed as AWOL, nearly all of them facing felony charges. That amounts to a 10% rate of missing participants. The report is only the second of its kind released by OCJ. Beach issued the first report at the end of May and promised monthly updates

He took office on December 1 and inherited a deeply troubled electronic monitoring program from his predecessor, Judge Timothy Evans, who served as chief judge for 24 years. Under Evans, OCJ assumed responsibility for all new electronic monitoring participants on April 1, 2025, following the Cook County Sheriff’s transition out of the program.

Upon assuming leadership of the court system, Beach immediately ordered a review of the EM program, which was already under intense scrutiny after a person on electronic monitoring, Lawrence Reed, allegedly set a woman on fire aboard a Blue Line CTA train weeks earlier.

Within two months, Beach announced significant changes to the program, including redefining a “major violation” as

an unapproved absence of three hours or more, down from the previous threshold of 48 hours.

Beach’s initial EM report at the end of May showed an 8% AWOL rate. The latest report, with a 10% rate, represents a 25% increase in the number of missing participants between the two reporting periods.

Beach began releasing the reports after CWBChicago twice requested electronic monitoring escape data from his office in the days following the April 25 fatal shooting of Officer John Bartholomew and the life-altering wounding of his partner as they guarded a prisoner at Swedish Hospital. Beach’s office did not respond to either request.

“Transparency is not optional. It is a core obligation of this office,” Beach said in a statement released after issuing his May report. “The public has a right to know how this program operates, what the data shows and what we are doing every day to make it stronger.”

His office said escape reports would be issued regularly, but the report due at the end of June did not appear on the court’s website until this week.

The report’s delayed release came after CWBChicago reported that Dwayne Milton, a 10-time felon who had gone missing from one of the court’s ankle-monitoring programs, was arrested by Illinois State Police troopers in the backyard of Pritzker’s Gold Coast mansion around 10 p.m. July 4.

The data shows that people accused of retail theft had one of the highest AWOL rates. Of the 67 people who were supposed to be wearing ankle monitors in retail theft cases, nearly half, 31, were listed as AWOL. As of June 1, the court’s electronic

monitoring programs included 11 people with pending murder cases, 23 facing attempted murder charges, 104 charged with criminal sexual assault, 80 charged with robbery and 17 facing carjacking charges.

One person facing attempted murder charges was listed as AWOL, as were two people charged with criminal sexual assault, nine people charged with robbery and two people facing carjacking charges.

High-profile violations

Despite Beach’s efforts to overhaul the program, participants have continued to be involved in high-profile incidents, raising questions about whether the ankle-moni-

AWOL see p. 7

City proposes taxpayer assistance for 90-unit Edgewater development

Developer to be gifted city real estate

The Dept. of Housing has introduced two ordinances to authorize financial assistance and the conveyance of City-owned property for 5853 N. Broadway, to a proposed housing development in Edgewater.

The project would consist of a single 11-story building with 90 apartment units for low- and moderate-income families and would be financed through a combination of 9% and 4% federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

The proposed ordinances would autho-

size up to \$18.5 million in City-issued tax-exempt

bonds, up to \$22 million in Tax Increment Financing [TIF] assistance paid by adjacent property tax payers from the Hollywood/Sheridan TIF District, totaling up to approximately \$9.8 million, and Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credits.

The ordinances would also authorize the gifting of the City-owned property that was formerly Dept. of Streets and Sanitation ward yard on Broadway for the project, being undertaken by Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp.

Open Space taxes will fund three North Side projects

Six open space projects across Chicago will be supported through Open Space taxes grants approved by City Council July 15, three of which are on the North Side.

The projects and grant amounts include CircEsteem Plaza, 4730 N. Sheridan Rd. who may get up to \$575,000 in taxpayer support to create a 2,900-square-foot plaza with seating, pavers, planters and bike racks in front of the circus arts property. Taxpayers will cover the entire of project costs.

Goose Island Overlook, 1111 N. Elston Ave., will also get up to \$800,000 in tax-

payer support for environmental remediation of a former gas plant for future redevelopment as a public park.

Montrose Metra Garden, 4350 N. Ravenswood Ave., North Center may get up to \$79,200 in taxpayer funds for installation of a second water source at an existing neighborhood vegetable garden. OSIF will cover the entirety of project costs.

The Open Space program allocates taxes paid by new home buyers for local improvements that offset the impact of new residents on city services and parks.

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Police Beat...

Burglars steal SUV, cause multi-vehicle Rogers Park crash

Charges were pending for one of four people who stole a car from an auto shop in Rogers Park and then crashed into multiple cars around 11:20 p.m. July 14.

Chicago police said four men entered Euro Collision in the 6800 block of N. Clark St. and swiped a red SUV from the property, leading to a multi-vehicle crash that injured four people.

Police say that before smashing into the garage door, they plowed into a gray SUV, an occupied black SUV and two parked vehicles.

Three women and a man inside the black SUV that was hit were taken to local hospitals in good condition.

One man was taken into custody, and charges are pending. The other three men ran away.

72-year-old charged with aggravated battery of 23-year-old

Eric Webber, 72, or the 600 block of Hull Terrace in Evanston,



Eric Webber

was charged on July 17 with one felony count of Aggravated Battery/Discharge Firearm.

Webber was arrested by the Chicago police on July 15, at 12:22 a.m., in the 7400 block of N. Rogers Ave. He was identified as the offender who, minutes earlier, shot and injured a 23-year-old male victim in the 7400 block of N. Rogers Ave.

Webber was placed into custody on scene and was subsequently charged accordingly.

Two more teens charged in 'Lakeview goons' mob attack, bringing total to seven

Chicago police have arrested two more juveniles in connection with a mob attack and robbery linked to a group that Ald. Scott Waguespack has called the "Lakeview Goons," bringing the total number of juveniles charged in the case to seven. The 16-year-old boys, whom a source identified as twin brothers, surrendered July 14 at Area Three Police Headquarters at Belmont and Western.

At about 8:45 p.m. April 4, a 19-year-old man walking home from his job at a Roscoe Village pizzeria was surrounded, beaten, and robbed by a group of high school-age boys in the 3500 block of N. Hoyne Ave. He was nearly home when the group approached him. Although he tried to defend himself, the boys allegedly took his cash, phone, and keys. Waguespack called it a "brutal attack."

Chicago police said the assault involved "at least" 10 assailants and was captured on multiple surveillance cameras. Waguespack said the robbery was the "main topic" of a recent community policing meeting and that the group may also be connected to other similar incidents reported in the area over the last couple of years.

The two boys arrested July 14 are each charged with robbery and aggravated battery in a public place. All seven of the accused are either 15 or 16 years old.

Investigators received "hundreds" of tips because so many of the suspects' peers and classmates recognized them in the surveillance footage. Given the reputations

some of the suspects have at school, their classmates were "eager to exercise their civic responsibilities" by assisting with their identification, the source said.

With all of the known suspects now charged, the investigation is likely winding down unless new information surfaces. Anyone with helpful details is encouraged to contact the Chicago Police tip line. The case number is JK206078.

Because all of the accused are juveniles, the public cannot attend their court hearings, Waguespack said.

Man who killed House of Blues patron with single punch gets 5 years, avoids murder charge under Illinois 'one-punch' rule



Jamie Miller

A man who fatally punched a House of Blues patron outside the River North venue in Nov. 2023 was sentenced to five years in prison July 15 after pleading guilty to involuntary manslaughter, according to court records. Jamie Miller, 32, was originally charged with murder. But prosecutors were unlikely to win that charge at trial, based on nearly a century of Illinois case law holding that a person cannot reasonably expect a single punch to kill someone.

Miller's sentence will be cut in half under state law, and he will also receive credit for 912 days spent on electronic monitoring and in jail while awaiting trial, according to an order from Judge Mariano Reyna.

Prosecutors alleged Miller was soliciting money outside the venue for a "fictitious school basketball program" when Andrew Hulburt, who was leaving a show, swore at him. Miller responded by walking up to Hulburt, 28, and punching him once in the left temple, causing him to fall backward and strike his head on the pavement. Hulburt never regained consciousness. The medical examiner determined he suffered a dissected vertebral artery.

Prosecutors said the attack was captured on video, and additional footage showed Miller walking to a car and leaving the area. Three eyewitnesses identified him in photo lineups, according to officials.

Judge Kelly McCarthy initially granted the state's request to detain Miller, saying his alleged willingness to kill someone "due to mere words" made him a threat to the community. Miller's attorney appealed and won his release on an ankle monitor. In the appeal, the attorney argued Miller could not reasonably have expected that a single punch to another healthy man would result in death or great bodily harm. Appellate justices, citing extensive Illinois case law, agreed and sent the detention decision back to the trial judge.

The appellate ruling noted that Miller's attorney disputed the state's characterization of the fundraising as fake, saying prosecutors were trying "to make it seem like he's there doing something unlawful." Defense counsel told the court Miller was collecting money for a violence prevention program, not a fictitious charity, according to the justices' written decision.

Chicago police records show a long history of Miller soliciting money for charities that turned out not to exist.

In 2015, he received a year of court supervision for theft by deception after police said he was caught soliciting for a "fictitious basketball team" and an outfit called "Operation Save Our Sons" at the Millennium Park Metra station. A flyer seized by police that year read: "PLEASE SUPPORT THE ENGLEWOOD YOUTH."

Prosecutors dropped charges accusing him of soliciting for a charity without a license in both 2017 and 2019, after police said they observed him running similar operations near

Millennium Park. When he was arrested in the 2017 case, tied to a "bucket boys" charity, Miller was carrying \$498 in cash, according to his arrest report.

Weeks after Hulburt's death, and roughly two weeks before Miller was arrested and charged in the case, prosecutors charged him with wire fraud and theft of between \$500 and \$10,000, accusing him of stealing \$1,900 through Zelle from a 22-year-old man outside a Shake Shack in Wrigleyville on Jan. 7, 2024. Court records do not detail how investigators believe Miller gained control of the victim's phone, but Chicago police had warned that same month that scammers posing as fake charity solicitors were operating outside that location.

In addition to involuntary manslaughter, Miller also pleaded guilty to theft by deception in that case. Judge Reyna sentenced him to three years. With the state's 50% sentence reduction and 600 days of credit already earned on an ankle monitor and in jail, Miller is not expected to serve additional prison time for that offense.

The "one punch" legal standard that spared Miller a murder conviction, while well established in Illinois, may surprise many. It came into play again just last month in another closely watched case. Henry Graham, who has been repeatedly arrested for randomly battering people in Chicago, Evanston, and on the CTA, stood trial without a jury on a murder charge for punching Northern Trust bank employee Russell Long on the Magnificent Mile in the summer of 2023. Long collapsed immediately, struck his head, and died days later without regaining consciousness.

Judge Charles Burns cited the same body of case law in rejecting the murder charge, instead finding Graham guilty of involuntary manslaughter. Sentencing is pending, but Graham is not expected to receive more than five years, which, combined with the state's 50% reduction and time already served, would likely mean his release from custody.

Man arrested with machete on CTA twice in 3 days



Ronald Reed is seen with an image of the knife and machete that he is accused of having at a CTA Green Line station.

A Chicago man is accused of carrying a machete on a CTA train just two days after a judge released him to await trial on an earlier machete arrest, and questions are now being raised about why he wasn't hit with a more serious charge the first time around, one that could have kept him detained from the start.

Chicago police arrested Ronald Reed, 31, at the Clark-Lake CTA station around 2:51 p.m. July 8 after officers discovered he had a machete, according to a CPD report. A police spokesperson said officers initially stopped Reed for having an open can of alcohol and then subsequently found the weapon.

But prosecutors decided not to charge him with a felony.

"After a thorough review, we concluded that the evidence was insufficient to support felony charges related to the incident on July 8, 2026," a spokesperson for the Cook County State's Attorney's Office said. "The CCSAO remains committed to making all charging decisions based on the evidence and the law."

Instead, Reed was cited with ordinance violations for having a weapon



John Williams, inset, and the weapons allegedly seized during the warrant execution.

North Center firearms restraining order search nets 20 guns, including machine gun

A Chicago man is being held in Cook County Jail after Sheriff's Police investigators said they recovered a fully automatic weapon, dozens of additional guns, and thousands of rounds of ammunition while executing a firearm restraining order at his home.

John Williams, 50, was arrested July 3 in the 4200 block of N. Leavitt St. on charges of aggravated battery in a public place and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, according to court and Chicago Police records. Prosecutors did not seek his detention at that time, and Judge Ankur Srivastava released him with orders to surrender his Firearm Owner's Identification Card and refrain from possessing firearms while his case was pending, court records show.

Three days later, on July 6, a woman filed for a firearm restraining order against Williams in domestic violence

court, according to records. The Cook County Sheriff's Office said its Gun Investigation Team executed the order on July 9 in the 4200 block of N. Leavitt St.

During the search, investigators recovered 20 guns, 62 magazines, and more than 2,500 rounds of ammunition, according to the sheriff's office. One of the firearms had been fitted with a switch that made it fully automatic, legally qualifying as a machine gun, officials said.

Williams, whose FOID card and concealed carry license had both been revoked, was taken into custody at the scene and charged with unlawful possession of a machine gun, according to the sheriff's office. Once again, Williams appeared before Judge Srivastava at the Leighton Criminal Courthouse at 26th St. and California Ave., where the judge ordered him detained pending trial.

on the CTA and having alcohol on the CTA and misdemeanor charges for obstructing police, according to court records. None of those is detainable under the SAFE-T Act, and Reed was released after appearing in court on July 9, records show.

Two days later, at approximately 2:15 p.m. July 11, Cook County Sheriff's police saw Reed holding an open can of beer on a Green Line train near the Austin station, according to the sheriff's office.

Officers told Reed that drinking alcohol on the train violated CTA rules and took him into custody for disorderly conduct, the sheriff's office said. During a search, officers allegedly recovered a machete with an 18-inch blade in a sling on Reed's back, along with a knife with a 5-inch serrated blade in a holster, according to the sheriff's office.

Nine-time felon gets 25 years for stomping woman to death during Red Line train robbery in Loop

A nine-time convicted felon who



Mijawon Johnson

savagely beat and stomped a 61-year-old woman to death during a robbery attempt aboard a Red Line train in the Loop has been sentenced to 25 years in prison after a judge found him guilty but mentally ill of the Jan. 4, 2024, murder.

Mijawon Johnson, 39, was paroled in Aug. 2023 after serving half of a six-year sentence he received for robbing a covert narcotics officer on the West Side on St. Patrick's Day 2021. Less than five months later, he spotted another victim, Vivian Leah Morgan, as the CTA train they were riding neared State-Lake around 1:33 a.m.

Prosecutors said surveillance video showed Johnson trying to steal Morgan's bag and then launching a violent attack, pinning her head against a seat and repeatedly punching her in the head and stomach. Officials said he "stomped" on her body and abandoned her on the train. CTA employees found Morgan unresponsive when

the train arrived at the Roosevelt station. She remained on a ventilator for nearly two weeks before she passed away, officials said.

Using CTA video, investigators identified Johnson as the attacker and sent a bulletin to local police districts, according to a CPD report. On the day after the attack, officers on patrol saw Johnson on a CTA bus in the 700 block of W. Chicago Ave. They pulled the bus over and took him into custody.

According to Morgan's obituary, she was an Army veteran and studied nursing at East St. Louis Community College.

"Vivian will be remembered for her gift for making others laugh with her humor, her passion for roller skating and love for animals," the posting said.

Court records show Johnson pleaded guilty to one count of murder, a plea Judge Adrienne Davis accepted, finding him guilty but mentally ill. He must serve all 25 years of the sentence Davis handed down, giving him an anticipated parole date of Christmas Eve 2048.

When he attacked Morgan, he was on parole for trying to rob an undercover cop. In that case, Johnson held his hand to his side as if he had a gun and ordered the undercover cop to give him cash and his phone. The officer surrendered his phone and cash with pre-recorded serial numbers intended for drug purchases, according to the CPD case report. Other cops moved in and arrested Johnson when the covert officer gave them a secret signal to alert them that he was being robbed.

At the time of the robbery, Johnson was on parole for aggravated battery of a police officer at the Near North District station, 1160 N. Larrabee St. He was sentenced to prison six other times between 2007



Vivian Leah Morgan

High levels of cancer-causing radon found in 33% of Illinois homes

Radon linked to lung cancer, ovarian cancer, leukemia

BY BOB ZULEY

Is radon found in your home or workplace? That's a question that we should all be asking because testing is the only way to detect this naturally occurring radioactive gas.

Radon cannot be smelled or tasted but is responsible for around 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. every year, according to the American Cancer Society.

There is no safe level of exposure.

Radon is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas that forms naturally from the decay [breaking down] of naturally occurring radioactive elements such as uranium found in soil and rock throughout the earth in different amounts. Radon gas can move from soil and rock into the air and into ground water and surface water.

Radon breaks down into solid radioactive elements called radon progeny [including polonium-218, polonium-214, and lead-214]. Radon progeny can attach to dust and other particles and can be inhaled into the lungs. As radon and radon progeny in the air breaks down, they give off radiation that can damage DNA inside the body's cellular tissue.

For most people, exposure to radon comes from being indoors in homes, offices, schools, and other buildings. The level of radon in homes and other buildings depends on the traits of the rock and soil in the area. As a result, radon levels vary across the country and even within neighborhoods.

The average radon level in Illinois is higher than the national average. This means a large number of residential radon levels in the Chicago area are elevated.

In Chicago, radon gas should be a concern in any living space below the third floor. Because Chicago and Cook County are in EPA Zone 1 [high radon risk], any unit touching the ground – such as a basement, garden unit, or first-floor unit – requires testing.

Because warm air rises in tall buildings, a vacuum effect may pull soil gas upwards through air shafts, plumbing, and elevator shafts. The problem is particularly bad during colder months when windows and doors are kept shut.

Andrea Ash Stevens, executive assistant for the Protect Environmental National Headquarters, tells this newspaper that there is no safe level of exposure. Nearly 1,500 Illinois residents are expected to be diagnosed with radon-induced lung cancer this year. More than 40% of tested homes had radon levels at or above the



EPA action threshold.

Radon is the leading cause of environmental cancer mortality. Beyond lung cancer, according to a new study published in April 2026 in JAMA Network Open, women living in areas with higher indoor radon levels had a significantly higher risk of ovarian cancer.

After analyzing 127,000 women in the long-running Women's Health Initiative, researchers found that women living in high-radon zones had about a 31% higher risk of ovarian cancer and ovarian cancer deaths compared with those in low-radon areas.

A large U.S. study published in 2024 by Oregon State Univ., states a link between residential radon exposure and childhood leukemia was found including at radon levels below the EPA's recommended mitigation threshold.

Radon testing kits are available in Chicago through the American Lung Association at www.actionlung.org. Neighborhood hardware stores may have testing kits in-stock so call ahead. Lastly, radon home testing kits are readily available in Chicago at major home improvement retailers including Home Depot, Lowe's, or Menards.

More recently, Dwayne Milton's arrest in JB Pritzker's back yard also raises questions about whether the court's new policies are being followed. As we reported last week, court records indicate that Milton began violating the terms of his EM agreement almost immediately after being outfitted with an ankle monitor.

AWOL from p. 5

toring system can be salvaged or is doomed to a steady stream of headline-grabbing failures.

Prosecutors allege that Alphonso Talley, a seven-time felon and parole absconder with four pending felony cases, is responsible for shooting Bartholomew and his partner with a handgun he concealed while being arrested on a robbery charge April 25. But court records show that Beach's staff failed to follow the chief judge's new protocols in Talley's case.

Talley went missing for more than 17 hours on March 8. Less than an hour after he returned home, his ankle monitor died because he had not charged it, according to court filings. The monitor remained dead, and the system stopped tracking him, according to a report filed by the court's pretrial services office.

Under the new rules, the violation should have been brought to the attention of the judge handling Talley's cases within 24 hours. But court files and a hearing transcript show that the matter was not brought before Judge John Lyke until after 1 p.m. on March 11, more than 53 hours after Talley returned home and his monitor stopped working.

In January, Beach said the sher-

iff's office had agreed to expedite electronic monitoring warrants. But a sheriff's spokesperson said last month that the court never requested expedited service in Talley's case.

More recently, Milton's arrest in Pritzker's back yard also raises questions about whether the court's new policies are being followed. As we reported last week, court records indicate that Milton began violating the terms of his EM agreement almost immediately after being outfitted with an ankle monitor. The violations continued for six consecutive nights before the matter was reported to a judge, despite Beach's public pledge that major violations would be brought before a judge within 24 hours.

And last month, federal officials charged three alleged Tren de Aragua members with kidnapping an 18-year-old man from a South Side park this spring, beating him to death, shooting his body multiple times, and calling his mother to tell her where she could find the body.

Two of the accused men were supposed to be on court-ordered electronic monitoring at the time of the alleged murder for felony gun cases. One was AWOL and had an active warrant for his arrest when the abduction and killing allegedly occurred. The



A man identified by federal officials as Jose Pacheco Torres is wearing an ankle monitor issued by the Office of the Chief Judge of Cook County as he pushes the soon-to-be-murdered victim into a car as a co-conspirator stands nearby.

other was seen wearing an ankle monitor in images of the abduction released by federal officials.

The continuing violations leave the chief judge's office facing some fundamental ques-

tions: Is the electronic monitoring program salvageable? If so, how do we fix it? If not, how do we make someone else responsible for it?

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Fed panel tosses Clearview AI settlement

BY COOK COUNTY RECORD

Saying the deal was crafted largely to ensure lawyers maintained at least a chance at a big future payday, a federal appeals panel has tossed a "creative" settlement that had appeared, for a time, to end a group of sprawling biometric privacy lawsuits against tech firm Clearview AI by giving plaintiffs and their lawyers a 23% stake in the company's stock.

On July 13, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Clearview and the plaintiffs and their lawyers, led by the firm of Loevy & Loevy, of Chicago, to return to the table to negotiate a new deal, and this time to make sure everyone involved in the lawsuit is properly represented in the talks.

Seventh Circuit Judge David Hamilton noted that a class-action settlement requires structural assurances of fair and adequate representation. He wrote those those were lacking here. Hamilton was joined in the decision by circuit judges Nancy Maldonado and Rebecca Taibleson.

The decision means talks may need to largely start over in the high-risk, but potentially high-reward legal action. The plaintiffs had been in court against Clearview since 2020, over claims that the company had allegedly violated Illinois' Biometric Information Privacy Act.

According to the lawsuits, Clearview scraped more than three billion photographs posted online, then used artificial intelligence to scan the facial geom-

CLEARVIEW see p. 8

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Jaitee Thomas as Ray Charles with Chloe Johnson, Raeven Carroll and Tamara Batiest.



Vincet Jordan performs a Bill Withers medley with Kevin Pollack, Maxell McCloud Schingen, Jaitee Thomas and Dwight Neal.

BY SHEILA SWANN

As the Black Ensemble Theater continues its 50th Anniversary Season, *Men of Soul* is the current show to make you wanna holler, make you wanna dance, written and directed by Artistic Director Daryl D. Brooks.

Featuring songs by some of the greatest soul singers of all time, such as Ray Charles, Luther Vandross and Bill Withers, who each faced adversity and struggles but found strength in music.

There are no doubt some campy moments in this show, but it is all in good fun.

Get a ticket to get in the theater that Jackie Wilson built at 4450 N. Clark St. by visiting www.blackensemble.org.

Performances run Fridays at 7:00 p.m., Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. through August 2.

Tickets are \$69 (fees included).
Valet parking is available for \$15
(cash only).

tices violated the Act in Illinois, saying Clearview had been required to first get permission from Illinois residents pictured in those photos before scanning their faces and to provide certain notifications concerning what they intended to do with those scans.

CLEARVIEW *from p. 7*

etry of people whose faces were imaged in those photos. The scans harvested unique biometric identifiers from the faces imaged in those photos, which Clearview then used to build databases to sell to law enforcement and others.

The lawsuits assert these prac-

INSIDE PUBLICATIONS



Ian Wardropper



Cari B. Sacks



Adam Sebelian



Pope Leo

WEATHER *from p. 2*

Lyric Opera of Chicago, and The Art Institute of Chicago, where she served on the Board's Committee on European Decorative Arts and was a member of the Antiquarian Society. She was buried from Saints Faith, Hope and Charity, Winnetka.

SHOP AND BOP: The annual Andersonville Summer Sidewalk Sale happens this Friday, July 24 – Sunday, July 26, from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Featuring more than 40 businesses from 4800 to 5800 N. Clark St. and the adjacent side streets will line the sidewalks with summer sales, bargain antiques, and local treasures. Independent musicians and other artists will perform throughout the district.

WHO'S WHERE: The Board of Directors of the Driehaus Museum have added Chicago philanthropist **Cari B. Sacks** and former Director of the Frick Collection **Ian Wardropper** to its Board of Directors. **Sherry Lea Fox** and **Lorelei Knutson Beaucaire** at the Barn Steakhouse in Evanston... **Jolanta Ruege** and **Jyl Bonaguro** spotted lunching at the Ritz Carlton... **Jill Cress** at the New York Stock Exchange... former Ald. **Gene Schulner** lunching in Lincoln Square with former Brauhaus owners, brothers **Harry** and **Guenter Kempf** at the Niedersachsen Club, where German songs are still sung... the Dept. of Justice, Civil Rights Division just swore in 100 new hires (hope it works)... **Ken** and **Mary Claire Scorsone Moll** doing some Summer in Paris... Lake Forest's **Mary Kay** and **Dennis Grant** in Minnesota celebrating daughter, **Katie's** 50th birthday... Congrats to Gilda's Club Chicago on a great event honoring two of our town's favorites, **Grant DePorter** and the **Hunt Family**, represented by **Bonnie Hunt**... Congrats to **Adam Zebelian**, named treasurer of the Chicago Bar Assoc. for 2026-2027... **Julia Jacobs** up in the Northwoods at Eagle River... Restoration at the Drake Hotel

has revealed a great Chicago gem, Chicago's iconic Gold Coast hotel just got its gold back... **Brendan O'Connor** enjoying the lapping waters of Lake Como in Northern Italy... **Adam Umbach** with his Berlin exhibit behind him flexed



Gibson's Kathy O'Malley Piccone with Bunny Frum, Jennifer Sutton Brievea, Bobbi Panter and Sherrill Bodine.

his painting muscles at the famed Hamptons Art Fair on Long Island... **Dan Balanoff** and his posse making a stop at the Rainbow Club on Damen... Mother McAuley grad **Isabella Taylor** has won the Paul Simon Prize for voter education, based on her plans to create a YouTube channel to inform young voters about candidates ... For his birthday this year, **Mark Olley** and best pooch, **Hudson**, are asking for donations to The Service Club of Chicago because this nonprofit and their mission mean a lot to them... Congratulations to the new couple, **Michael Campos** and **Matina Giannopoulos**, God grant you a lifetime of love and happiness.

SWING BATTER: Chicago author **Neal Samors** announced the publication of a new book co-authored with his friend, **Eric Sheinin**, called “I Can’t Wait Until Next Year: The Agony of Being a Cubs Fan.” This 188-page book, with more than 75 photographs and memorabilia, is available as a Print On Demand publication from Amazon, either in softcover (\$30) or hard cover (\$40). They include a big section on the White Sox too.

BIRTHDAY JOY: Gibson's **Kathy O'Malley Piccone's** birthday bash was certainly top drawer when best pals gathered round the table at Ralph Lauren Bar & Grill with **Sherrill Bodine, Bobbi Panter, Jennifer Sutton Brieve**

and **Bunny Frum.**

FLUNKING OUT: Recent cruel family dramas and behind the scenes nastiness raises ultimate questions for the British people. How much longer will the people of Britain have to wait before freeing themselves from the dysfunctional House of Windsor?

I'm afraid there is no pay-off for democracy when the off-kilter royals continue to wreak havoc on their siblings and aging older generation. What a tragic psychological and familial distortion of family life they demonstrate. And it doesn't help that **Queen Camilla**

is a family gorgon. A beast of frightening proportions. **Prince William** and his gang have better acting skills but their inability to act with ordinary goodwill appears beyond them. No interest in being an actual functioning family. It is beyond them all. Hard-working younger Brits succeeding in careers find their presence quite distasteful.

**You don't need a weatherman
to know which way the wind
blows.**
- Bob Dylan

tog515@gmail.com

GAMBLING *from p. 3*

downstate to gauge what will occur in Chicago if VGT's are legalized here. Bars, restaurants, and other businesses offering VGT's were burglarized 473 times in 2025, an increase over the 358 burglaries that occurred in 2024.

Not even six months into 2026, there have already been more than 500 burglaries of VGT parlors in Illinois. Chicago already sees a pandemic of nighttime burglaries to businesses with ATM's and Sweepstakes machines being targeted, and the number of business burglaries are expected to skyrocket if VGT's are legalized in Chicago.

The Illinois Gaming Board [IGB], the state regulatory agency overseeing casinos, sports betting, and video gambling, urges terminal operators and VGT locations to take all available, proactive measures to enhance security, deter illegal activity, and advance the safety and integrity of gaming operations.

Niche industries sure to make out like bandits are the business security firms, video surveillance systems, and nighttime security that businesses will count on to harden their buildings. The IGB requires terminal operators to provide continual digital surveillance at locations whenever video gaming terminals are operating.

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Tribute to John Prine coming this October

BY SHEILA SWANN

The Old Town School of Folk Music [OTSFM] will host a day-long celebration in honor of John Prine's 80th Birthday on Saturday, October 10

In the 1960's, Prine was a regular participant in songwriting and guitar classes at the OTSFM where he honed his craft and shared his music with some of his earliest audiences. His registration card illustrates his regularity until the time he was drafted in 1966.

A former Chicago mailman, Prine released his iconic, self-titled debut album in 1971 and spent nearly five decades influencing generations of musicians before his death. Prine returned home to Chicago and the OTSFM over the years for concerts, benefits and special events.

To celebrate what would have been his 80th birthday, the Prine family's Hello In There Foundation is hosting a five-day festival called "Souvenirs" in Chicago. Scheduled events run October 7-11, and include tribute concerts at the Chicago Theater, history tours of his hometown of Maywood, and a mural dedication at the OTSFM, where Prine originally took guitar lessons.

This month the Prine estate and Oh Boy Records digitally released John Prine: Live at Old Town School of Folk. The 28-track set features the first officially



John Prine

released complete concert recording from Prine, captured at a 2010 benefit in his hometown.

Prine died in 2020 from complications caused by COVID-19.

Upcoming OTSFM celebrations include:
• *John Prine 80th Birthday Celebration*, Saturday, Oct. 10, 10:30 a.m. at Maurer Hall, 4544 N. Lincoln Ave.

• *Yes I Guess They Oughta Name a Drink After You: The Old Town School and Chicago's Musical Tribute to John Prine* will take place Saturday, Oct. 10, 6:00 p.m. at American Legion, Tattler Post 973, 4355 N. Western Ave.

Bumble bee is official State Bee

The black and gold bumble bee is one of 400 bee species in state

BY BOB ZULEY

The black and gold bumble bee is one of more than 400 species of native bees in Illinois but it has now been named the state's official bumble bee.

Bombus auricomus, which nests underground, is found in various grassland and prairie habitats including sand, gravel, shrub, and black soil.

They compete for resources with honey bees but their role as pollinators is environmentally important. "When we protect our pollinators, we're protecting our entire environment," said State Rep. Janey Yang Rohr, the main sponsor of the legislation.

The black and gold bumble bee is very similar in appearance to the American bumble bee. They are long-tongued bees that feed on nectar and pollen..

Because they are foraging generalists, you can spot them throughout the city, particularly in places with abundant native flowers such as Lincoln Park, Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary, and at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum's butterfly haven and surrounding gardens.

There is a famous myth that bumblebees "defy physics" that originated in the 1930s when engineers mistakenly analyzed their



Bombus auricomus are not aggressive insects. Females, but not males, do have a sting but they are unlikely to use it unless they feel threatened. The bumblebees that visit your garden or outdoor space are usually only interested in finding flowers.

wings as if they were fixed airplane wings. In reality, bumblebee flight relies on "unsteady aerodynamics."

Rather than simply flapping their wings up-and-down, bees move their wings back-and-forth in a sweeping figure-eight pattern that generates lift on both the forward and backward strokes creating small, spinning vortices over their wings generating enough lift to easily support their bulky bodies and heavy loads.



Paola Nervi (L) and Daniela Cavallero (R) have opened L'Angolo Italiano in Rogers Park.

Cousins merge Italian cuisine, language, culture together in Rogers Park

Italian cousins Daniela Cavallero and Paola Nervi have opened L'Angolo Italiano, an Italian bistro located at 1538 W. Jarvis Ave., in Rogers Park. The new bistro is co-housed with Sentieri Italiani, the Italian language and cultural center founded by Cavallero in 1997.

The space now offers guests a chance to experience Italy through its cuisine, language, traditions, and community.

L'Angolo Italiano hopes to be an extension of Sentieri Italiani's mission to build a North Side connection to Italy at a site where visitors can try authentic regional Italian cuisine while participating in language classes, cultural events, cooking demonstrations, lectures, travel programs, film nights, and other experiences focussed on Italian life.

Founded as *un salotto italiano*—an Ital-

ian living room where people gather—Sentieri Italiani has become one of Chicago's longest-established centers dedicated to Italian language and culture. The addition of L'Angolo Italiano is an effort to show people another essential part of Italian life: the table.

"Our dream has always been to create a place where people don't simply eat Italian food—they experience Italy," said Cavallero and Nervi in a released statement. "Whether someone joins us for dinner, an Italian class, or a cultural event, we hope they leave feeling like they've spent time in Italy."

L'Angolo Italiano features handcrafted regional dishes, emphasizing fresh ingredients, authentic recipes, and Italian hospitality.



Gregory J. Lindeman
Founder/Director

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ask for something, they're
real sweet. It's all music.
— John Prine

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Registration Number: M26001834 on July 13, 2026.
Under the Assumed Business Name of: PRETTY HABIT CO.
with the business located at: 6540 SOUTH KING DRIVE APT 2B, CHICAGO, IL 60637
The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: Owner/Partner Full Name: AYANI MURPHY
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This sale is to be held on Thursday, July 30, 2026, at 2:00 pm. Cash only.

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COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
CHURCHILL MRA FUNDING I, LLC, as successor-in-interest to PEBBMAX LENDING CO, LLC, as successor-in-interest to W Financial REIT, Ltd., as successor-in-interest to W Financial Fund, LP Plaintiff
vs.
RAFFAELLO CHICAGO PROPCO, LLC, TERGESTE, INC., d/b/a PELAGO, and Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants
Defendant
26 CH 1885Calendar
NOTICE OF SALE
PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercounty Judicial Sales Corporation will on August 17, 2026, at the hour 11:00 a.m., Intercounty's office, 120 West Madison Street, Suite 718A, Chicago, IL 60602, sell, in person, to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:
Pin Numbers:
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13290423
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION

Real Estate For Sale

COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES LLC, Plaintiff
vs.
UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES OF ROBERTA GOLDIN; 1550 CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION; THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; AMIR MOHABBAT AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR ROBERTA GOLDIN; GOLD COAST CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION; LOIS JOAST; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS;
Defendant
25 CH 12496
CALENDAR 62
NOTICE OF SALE
PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercounty Judicial Sales Corporation will on August 17, 2026, at the hour 11:00 a.m., Intercounty's office, 120 West Madison Street, Suite 718A, Chicago, IL 60602, sell, in person, to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:
P.I.N. 17-03-101-029-1160.
Commonly known as 1550 N. Lake Shore Drive, Unit 25G, Chicago, IL 60610.
The real estate is: condominium residence. The purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 of the Condominium Property Act. Sale terms: At sale, the bidder must have 10% (or 25% if so ordered in the Judgment of Foreclosure) down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property is sold AS IS subject to all liens or encumbrances. The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the circuit court case record, property tax record and the title record to verify all information before bidding. IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER THE ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(c) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW. For information call Sales Department at Plaintiff's Attorney, Diaz Anselmo & Associates P.A., 1771 West Diehl Road, Suite 120, Naperville, IL 60563. (630) 453-6960. 4890-223694
INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
intercountyjudicialsales.com
13290301
151515 -----
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION

Real Estate For Sale

SELENE FINANCE, LP
Plaintiff,
-v.-
SCOTT ROWLAND, THE HUNTINGTON NATIONAL BANK, MOHAWK NORTH CONDOMINIUM, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS
Defendants
2025CH10622
1428 N MOHAWK ST APT A
CHICAGO, IL 60610
Property Index No. 17-04-121-094-1004
The real estate is improved with a residence.
Sale terms: If sold to anyone other than the Plaintiff, 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, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. 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.
Where a sale of real estate is made to satisfy a lien prior to that of the United States, the United States shall have one year from the date of sale within which to redeem, except that with respect to a lien arising under the internal revenue laws the period shall be 120 days or the period allowable for redemption under State law, whichever is longer, and in any case in which, under the provisions of section 505 of the Housing Act of 1950, as amended (12 U.S.C. 1701n), and subsection (d) of section 3720 of title 38 of the United States Code, the right to redeem does not arise, there shall be no right of redemption.
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

Real Estate For Sale

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). IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.
You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.
For information, examine the court file, CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Plaintiff's Attorneys, 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100, BURR RIDGE, IL, 60527 (630) 794-9876
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.jscc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.
CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100
BURR RIDGE IL, 60527
630-794-5300
E-Mail: pleadings@il.cslegal.com
Attorney File No. 14-25-06451
Attorney ARDC No. 00468002
Attorney Code. 21762
Case Number: 2025CH10622
TJSC#: 46-811
NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.
Case # 2025CH10622
13290137
080808 -----

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LAWLESS from p. 1

Substack.

Jeri, who owns a building near the park, but does not live there, shared Amy’s frustration, and said the Park District ignores the problem. “They can’t do anything about it because they’re, you know, they’re told from the superintendent that ‘we don’t have any place for them.’ It’s not getting any better.”

Ronan Park is part of a chain of parks situated along the River’s North Branch. Trails wind through the parks, and Jeri believes that drug traffickers are using the trails for drug distribution operations. She believes that the location is perfect for drugs to be trafficked in all directions, either along the river or the roads.

Both witnesses have seen people wearing backpacks coming in and out of the encampment. They also use electric scooters to quickly move in and out of the park.

Ronan Park is small, only 12.5 acres, so

SHOOTING from p. 1

from an altercation between a group of individuals after leaving a nearby bar on Lincoln Ave. and moving onto Belden Ave.”

Knudsen said last month that concerns about the Lincoln Ave. bar corridor predate the June shooting.

“For several years, my office has been in contact with the City’s Business Affairs and Consumer Protection Dept. and CPD related to this corridor, specifically to advocate for stricter rules on nightlife,” he said. “On this stretch, there are a few businesses about which we consistently receive noise, cleanliness and safety complaints. Adjacent businesses and residents have called for a reevaluation of what is permitted along this corridor, and they have been partners in this ongoing advocacy.”

Late last month, Knudsen said his office was “actively exploring additional tools, including stricter regulations for businesses that repeatedly contribute to public safety concerns, enhanced parking enforcement, and potential limitations on late-night operations where appropriate” to address concerns along Lincoln Ave.

“My office remains committed to working with city departments, law enforcement, neighbors, and business owners to identify meaningful solutions and ensure we are doing everything possible to prevent incidents like this from happening again,” he wrote in a newsletter on June 26.

If you have any video or other information that may be of use to the police, call Area 3 Detectives at (312) 744-8263, email CAPS.018District@chicagopolice.org, submit a tip here, or call the 18th district police station at (312) 742-5870.

CUTS from p. 1

but you guys stonewalled the process, didn’t notify the state,” Beale replied. “We had to notify the state. It could have been streamlined, and it just goes to the point that everybody in this body is saying that you guys are stonewalling the parts of this budget that you all don’t like.”

Guzman said it takes time to implement new revenue measures, but the Bureau of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection is processing VGT applications. Beale said the administration is also trying to repeal the city ordinance that allows video gambling.

“What makes us think that you guys are going to implement a process when you are actively trying to repeal it?” Beale asked.

Ald. Samantha Nugent [39th] questioned why the city has failed to collect any of the \$6 million projected for augmented reality, especially after a major event was held in the city last month.

“Over 717,000 people participated in this Pokémon Go event, which is augmented reality,” Nugent noted.

Among revenues the city has collected, Guzman said liquor taxes and checkout bag taxes were below projections but could improve during the summer months.

INSIDE PUBLICATIONS

the encampment proper takes up a good chunk of the park’s space, making it difficult to navigate. The encampment itself is up against the fence by the Global Garden, which is close to a condominium and apartment buildings nearby, providing residents clear sight-lines.

Tents for the homeless are required be 100 feet away from residential buildings, but according to David, there are some 40 feet from his home.

Relations between both the homeless and community residents have badly deteriorated. Witnesses say that the criminal activity begins when the sun goes down. There’s yelling, and swearing.

A gateway to the park opened earlier in July, and Block Club Chicago reported on that ceremony, saying that protestors had called for more action against the encampment, against about half-dozen counter protestors. The article mentioned that both sets of protestors argued with each other while the opening ceremony proceeded.

Indeed, all over town the homeless camps end up pitting neighbors against homeless activists, many who are affiliated with non-profits and non-governmental organizations and agencies.

The Block Club article also noted that 33rd Ward Ald. Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez claims her resources for helping the homeless were stretched thin. It has required her to rely on a network of non-profits to care for the homeless population living in her ward.

This has not endeared her to resident constituents.

“She’s prioritizing these people,” Amy said bitterly. “She is not prioritizing people who voted her into office, or the families that live in this area.”

“The Alderwoman’s office is totally useless,” said Jeri. “She just deflects everything.”

David said that he met with the Alderwoman on July 1, when Rodriguez-Sanchez

said she would limit the encampment’s size. However, it has only grown since. She has also not facilitated a meeting between residents, the CPD, police and her office, despite making those promises. He has not heard back from her.

According to David, she said that Ronan Park is outside of her jurisdiction, despite the city code giving Aldermen wide jurisdiction on Ward concerns. Amy voiced frustration with the apparent lack of any plan from city leaders to handle the problem.

David said that he met with Ald. Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez on July 1, when she said she would limit the encampment’s size. However, it has only grown since. She has also not facilitated a meeting between residents, the CPD, police and her office, despite making those promises. He has not heard back from her.

Jeri said that the encampment was always a “mess” from the very beginning. She mentioned that the encampment residents brought propane tanks with them.

(This newspaper has also reported on numerous propane tank explosions that have occurred in homeless camps along N. Lake Shore Dr. They are used for cooking and heating of tents.)

A Substack article written by independent journalist Seth Slabaugh corroborated this, telling the story of witnesses who saw a camp resident bringing propane tanks inside. Ronan is not one of the CPD’s approved grilling areas.

They are also displeased with how this issue has been covered in some local media. They found the coverage to be too biased

towards the homeless campers. Encampment members quoted in those articles say that local residents equate homelessness with criminal behavior.

Although non-profits and church groups do arrive to help on Saturdays, Amy says that’s the only day they usually help. She described the rest of the week as, “Buck wild craziness.”

There is also alleged prostitution going on in the park. Amy said she heard a woman talking to four men, telling them to expose themselves. Another neighbor told this newspaper about her young daughter witnessing sexual activity by just looking out her window.

Needles have been discarded on the ground. According to other reports some of the encampment members were using diabetes drugs, while other witnesses report seeing some members smoking from a glass pipe. Smoking is strictly prohibited in all Chicago parks, beaches, and harbors.

Jeri has tried talking to the CPD, but she said Supt. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa explained that there is a moratorium on moving encampments.

Jeri also relayed the story of meeting one homeless resident at a community meeting, and asked the man why he had rejected housing. She alleges that he told her that the housing was “unsafe.” However, she also said that the police believe that the man she talked to was the “ringleader.”

According to Jeri, someone also broke into a building adjacent to hers and left Latin Kings graffiti.

Despite, or perhaps because of their complaints, residents like Amy have been called “Karens.” There have been some attempts to foster communication between residents and the homeless living in the encampment. Residents report that there has always been a homeless presence in the park, that was tolerated, but that things have now gotten out of control. Community members have been recording some of the activities, and say they have come to fear retribution.

“I have never witnessed such an incredible lack of enforcement in my life,” said Amy. She believes that the presence of a refugee population—many of whom do not speak English—was a factor in moving the encampment to the park. She fears the refugees are themselves afraid to call the police.

Encampment sweeps have not solved the problem, but only moved the problem to new locations. Some encampment members have been offered housing, but have refused it.

“Well, you know what, when it comes to housing, beggars can’t be choosers,” said Amy. She criticized the group Parks For All’s role in the encampment, asking why they did not help the homeless population under Lower Wacker.

She floated the possibility of suing the city to make something happen. Jeri herself mused about needing to sell the building she owns.

Most importantly, the residents are frustrated, feeling like prisoners in their own homes.

“I mean, why should I be subjected to this?” Amy asked. “This is derailing my mental health, you know? It’s not something that makes you feel secure and safe.”

We reached out to Parks For All for comment, but at deadline we had not heard from a spokesman. We also reached out to the Chicago Police 17th district, but again there was nobody to comment. The Alderwoman’s office was also contacted, but we never heard from them either.

We also reached out to other residents, who spoke off the record, but many feared the aforementioned retribution or were skeptical of how this newspaper would cover this story. The Restore Gompers Park Coalition also reached out to us, but chose to speak off the record.

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