

**CITY OF CHICAGO
DISTRICT COUNCIL 001
COMMUNITY COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Type: ☒ Regular ☐ Special ☐ Closed

Meeting Date: July 23, 2025

Meeting Location: Near North Public Library, 310 W. Division Street

Meeting Start Time: 12:18 PM

Attendance & Quorum

Per the Open Meetings Act (OMA), a quorum requires at least two of the three members present in person.

- **Brad Kessler (Chair):** Present
- **Robert Johnson (Nominator):** Present
- **Karen Kane (Community Engagement):** Present

Quorum was confirmed.

Acknowledged Participants:

Library representative Sharon; technical and support staff, including Anna (camera/Zoom), Danette (support), and Ann (Zoom host); Commander Chris Biefeldt (18th District, appointed May 2025), Sergeant Schenk; and numerous community residents and organization representatives. Approximately 70 individuals registered via Zoom.

Opening Remarks

The council confirmed roll call and quorum. Recognition was given to the Near North Chicago Public Library for hosting and scheduling support, and appreciation was extended to police representatives and technical staff.

The council emphasized its role in partnership with the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (CCPSA), focusing on policy input and fostering safety, while committing to clarity in communication by reducing acronyms.

Meeting Format and Accessibility

The session was held in a hybrid format, both in-person and via Zoom. The council is experimenting with alternating meeting times to increase accessibility: July is held in daytime,

August is scheduled for the evening (Tuesday, August 26, 6:00 PM), and September is planned for midday. Sound issues have historically been a challenge; Anna and Danette were designated to support technical functions, while Ann managed to live-troubleshoot through Zoom.

Vote to approve minutes of June

Minutes from June 24, 2025 Regular Monthly Meeting 1 and June 26, 2025 Special Meeting were unanimously approved. June highlights included introductions by Captain Perez and Commissioner Sandra Wortham, with extensive discussion on traffic safety policies and the council's commentary letter to CCPSA.

Public Comment

Joe Rivera, CVS Store Manager (1165 N Clark): Reported sharp increases in theft following the removal of a patrol at Park and Division, with response times now up to an hour. Requested reinstatement of patrol presence.

Barbara Webb, Community Member: Raised concerns regarding misconduct and disorderly behavior at Seward and Lakeshore Parks, including loitering, drug use, and late-night gatherings. Reported difficulty receiving responses to prior complaints.

Tracy Alvarez, Resident and Parkside Board Member: Echoed concerns about Seward Park, noting noise, garbage, and disorder. Reflected positively on outgoing Alderman Burnett's accessibility and questioned future leadership.

Suzanne Belmore, Resident (Aster and Division): Highlighted ongoing public order issues such as illegal parking, street blockages, and drug activity. Requested stricter parking enforcement.

Council Reports and Discussion

Nominating Committee (Bob Johnson): Shared that the term of three CCPSA Commissioners will expire early 2026, including 2 youth seats, one must be from the North Side. . Emphasized the importance of reaching out to identify prospective candidate for the Community Commission and mentoring college-age candidates.

CCPSA Traffic Stop Policy Letter (Karen Kane): Reviewed the council's recent letter to commissioners and aldermen, discussing proposed prohibitions on stops for expired plates, missing registration, or loud music. Survey results, obtained via FOIA, showed over two-thirds

of 1,300+ respondents opposed the proposed restrictions. . The council plans further outreach and awaits a federal consent decree ruling on jurisdiction.

Crime and Public Safety Data (Karen Kane): Citywide crime trends continue downward (murder down 32%, robbery down 33%, burglary down 21%). However, the 18th District saw a spike in homicides (10 in 2025 versus 1 in 2024). Navy Pier and nearby hot spots are central concerns. Summer youth employment has expanded, though detective staffing remains flat. The council will invite Area 3 detectives for future collaboration.

Protests and Permits (Brad Kessler): FOIA requests have been submitted to CPD and related departments to clarify protocols and improve transparency around protests and large gatherings.

Guest Speaker – Commander Chris Biefeldt

Commander Biefeldt, appointed in May 2025, shared his background in patrol, specialized units, and district leadership.

District Crime Analysis:

- Recent homicides were linked to a mass shooting at an unpermitted venue, a domestic dispute at Navy Pier, and isolated retaliatory incidents in Cambridge Avenue. All but one incident resulted in arrests.
- Robberies and public disorder incidents remain concentrated around late-night venues and residential spillovers.
- Towing vehicles for illegal overnight parking has been the most effective deterrent for chronic gatherings. Twelve special patrol “missions” are scheduled each weekend.

Patrol Assignments: Oak Street retains a dedicated car; Cambridge Avenue has a CHA-funded patrol when possible. Clark and Division has had a dedicated car at certain times..

Community Concerns:

- Retail theft and visible drug activity: Requests for reinstated patrols at Clark & Division under consideration.
 - Quality of life issues: Noise and disturbances may receive delayed responses, though surveillance of hotspots continues.
 - Gang activity: Organizational structures are now fragmented, complicating interventions, but are addressed through interagency intelligence sharing.
 - Officers must work within law and policy; large group gatherings are monitored, with legal strategies under review.
 - Narcotics operations: Tactical assignments continue at key hotspots, with ongoing undercover enforcement.
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Community Feedback and Resources

- Park disorder complaints were addressed with the park district hotline (312-747-2193) and email (security@chicagoparkdistrict.com) as additional resources.
 - Variable Aldermanic attendance was noted; residents were encouraged to directly engage elected officials.
 - One resident raised personal concerns about stalking and police neglect.
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Future Meetings

- **Next Council Meeting:** August 26, 2025, 6:00 PM, location to be announced.
 - **Next CCPSA Meeting:** July 31, 2025; residents encouraged to attend and provide comment.
 - **Nominating Committee:** Meeting scheduled for Saturday (date not specified).
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Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 PM. The council expressed gratitude to Commander Biefeldt, library staff, technical team, and all community members for their participation and input.