

COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
June 20, 2006

Your League Observer had been warned that the County Board's efforts to cope in the absence of Pres. John Stroger (D-4, Chicago) were attracting unusually large numbers of onlookers. Accordingly, your Observer arrived at the fifth floor of the County Building at 9:30, (half an hour before the scheduled start of the meeting.) This proved to be insufficient, however. A line had already formed in the hall outside the boardroom, and for the next three-plus hours, members of the public were admitted only in dribbles. By 1:10 p.m., when your Observer was allowed in, the Board had completed consideration of the Finance, Zoning and Building, and Roads and Bridges agendas and had reached Item #90 on the regular Board Agenda.

Item #90 concerned federal money being distributed to the County under various programs. The commissioners expressed distress over cuts in the requests: the request for \$27,767,475 in Community Development Block Grant funds had been lowered to \$12,301,663.98, and the \$1,659,440 requested for the Emergency Shelter Grants Program had been reduced to \$460,217. Comr. Carl Hansen (R-15, Mount Prospect) remarked that this was not really a partisan matter and noted that cuts had also been made under the Clinton administration. However Comr. Tony Peraica (R-16 – Riverside) complained that the money was not being distributed evenly. This led to an outburst from Comr. Deborah Sims (D-5, Chicago), who said her district was poor and it was only fair that it should receive more money than wealthy districts. She added that she had been insulted, but in the end the item was approved.

A proposed ordinance sponsored by Comrs. Larry Suffredin (D-13, Evanston) and Gregg Goslin (R-14, Glenview) would follow the example of the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by providing a set procedure to deal with incapacity of the chief executive (in the case of the County, the president of the County Board.) With general approval, it was sent to the Finance and Rules Committees. Comr. Suffredin said he hoped work on it would be completed by the time the situation regarding President Stroger was known, presumably in July.

A tribute to 70 employees of the Sheriff's Office who have served in the Iraqi War was read into the record.

Shortly thereafter, Comr. Peraica introduced a proposed resolution providing that, since it was unclear whether President Stroger was able to perform his duties, the Board should take steps to investigate his condition and provide for a temporary or permanent replacement if necessary. There were still a number of spectators present, and their vocal reactions to the debate indicated that this was what they had been waiting for. In varying degrees, the commissioners appeared to be torn between the need to take action to end the current drift (Comr. Mike Quigley, D-10, Chicago, among others pointed to a looming crisis that would break if action was not taken soon, while Comr. Liz Gorman, R-17,

Orland Park, remarked that the Board was beginning to “look like the Cubs”) and the reluctance to take any action that might seem disrespectful of the stricken president.

In the end the majority of the commissioners favored waiting until July, when Stroger’s family and spokespeople had indicated that there would be a report on the President’s condition and wishes, though when in July was not clear. Comr. Peraica had called for a roll call vote on the resolution, and the result was 1 yea (Peraica), 10 nays’, 4 present and 2 absent.

Public speakers included George Blakemore, who complained about the small number of contracts being awarded to blacks. Regarding the Stroger matter, he commented that “We all have faults,” and “Life will go on.”

Among other speakers, one said he wanted the Burge report on police brutality released. Another spoke on president leadership and wished the best for President Stroger. He was followed by a speaker who expressed disgust with how the Board had acted regarding the Stroger matter, and did not feel his needs were being addressed. President Pro Tem Joseph Moreno (D-7, Chicago), scolded him and said the Board could not just eliminate the President. (Earlier, Moreno had said he would use his power as president pro tem to veto any move against Stroger.)

A Rogers Park resident claimed that his business had been ruined by the city’s Building Department. On other topics, a speaker demanded that the 9/11 Commission’s investigation be reopened, and another said the globalists’ takeover of the world should be stopped.

The Board then went into executive session.

Observed and reported by Daphne Daume