

COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JULY 12, 2006

Once again, more would-be spectators lined up in the hall on the County Building's fifth floor than could be accommodated in the relatively small County Board meeting room. However, a few League observers – among them Mary Ann Tate, Cynthia Schilsky, and Daphne Daume – were admitted by prior arrangement. Before the start of business, the Italian consul general was introduced and presented with a resolution honoring the Italizin soccer team for its victory in the world cup. Comr. Peter Silvestri (R-9, Elmwood Park) made the presentation, while several other commissioners claimed (not always seriously) family or other connections with Italy. Comr. Carl Hansen (R-15, Mount Prospect) noted that the Norse had spent a considerable time in Italy during the Middle Ages.

This was the last scheduled meeting of the County Board until September, and there was much routine business to be conducted. (The Finance Agenda had 63 legal-size pages and the regular agenda had 82.)

First, however, the commissioners took the opportunity to voice their objections to some remarks by aldermen, specifically Ald. William Beavers of Chicago's 7<sup>th</sup> ward. Alderman Beavers, who had been acting as a spokesman for the Stroger family since Pres. John Stroger's stroke, had outlined a plan whereby John Stroger's son Todd, now alderman of the 8<sup>th</sup> ward, would replace his father as County Board president, and Beavers would take over John Stroger's 4<sup>th</sup> district commissioner's seat. In the process he had remarked that the change would be restful, since aldermen worked much harder than commissioners, and otherwise demeaned the commissioners' work.

Led by Comr. John Daley (D-11, Chicago), the commissioners closed ranks, defending the importance of the commissioner's job and casting doubt on Beaver's ability to perform it.

Work on the Finance Agenda itself was completed in fairly short order – 44 pages of court orders were handled in one motion. Comr. Anthony Peraica (R-16, Riverside) asked when the report of mistreatment of suspects by police would be released and was told it would probably be finished by the end of July; Comr. Mike Quigley (D-10, Chicago) urged speedi. The appropriation trial balance for the period ending May 31 was submitted, leading to a discussion of the County's financial problems. Comrs. Peraica and Daley insisted that there was no support for raising taxes, Comr. Peraica noting that businesses were moving out of Cook County to venues with lower taxes; while Comr. Jerry Butler (D-3, Chicago) pointed out that sometimes taxes must be raised in order to provide necessary services. Comr. Quigley said the commissioners had been lied to and were only now recognizing the need to make hard choices, but Comr. Earlean Collins (D-1, Chicago) claimed bad choices, not lies, were the problem. Comr. Joseph Moreno (D-7, Chicago) suggested that the commissioners needed to sit down with the chief financial officer (Thomas Glaser) and go through every line of the proposed budget to see what could be done.

The Finance Committee adjourned at 11:30 am, and work on the Zoning and Building and Roads and Bridges agendas was finished in about five minutes. On the regular agenda, the report of the codification of County ordinances was taken out of order. Comrs. Forrest Claypool (D-12) and Peraica complimented Comrs. Larry Suffredin (D-13, Evanston) and Collins for their work on the project.

Item 3, also taken out of order, was the resignation of John Stroger as president of the County Board and Forest Preserve District and commissioner from the 4<sup>th</sup> district of Cook County effective July 31. It was announced that a special meeting to choose an interim president, to serve from August 1 to December 4, when the newly elected president and commissioners would be sworn in, would be held on July 19, at 10:00 am. (The new Democratic for County Board president would be chosen by the Democratic committeemen of the County on July 18.)

Each of the commissioners then gave a short talk recalling their memories of Stroger and their experiences during his presidency.

Later there was a discussion of the rules that would govern the special meeting: the decision would be by a simple majority of those commissioner s present and voting on the question; it would not be possible to vote “present.” Thus, if 16 commissioners were present and all voted, nine votes would be the winning margin. There was some discussion, especially concerning the elimination of the “present” vote, but in the end the rules were adopted by 14-2, with one (Stroger) absent.

Your League observers left around 2:30 pm, before the period dedicated to public speakers. Most of the other onlookers had also left by that time. However, George Blakemore was present and presumably spoke.

Reported by Daphne Daume