

**** Alderman ****
Michele Smith
 Chicago's 43rd Ward



Why I Voted 'No' to Changes to the Parking Meter Deal

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18th District Crime Alert: Armed Robbery

In the past two weeks there have been 2 incidents of armed robbery in the 18th District (Lincoln Park south of Fullerton) The offenders, who are armed with a handgun, approach the victims while they are walking down the sidewalk, announce a robbery and take the victim's personal property before fleeing. Click here to read the alert.

As the weather gets warmer it is even more important to pay attention when you are out. Block clubs are a great way for you and your neighbors to keep your neighborhood safe. Our office is happy to help you coordinate that and schedule a training. Contact us at (773) 348-9500 or e-mail us at

Dear Friends,

Yesterday, I voted 'no' to the proposed changes to the Parking Meter Deal. Although the changes to the deal passed 39-11, I want to share with you my reasons.

In short, after extensive analysis and obtaining as much information as I could, I did not think the deal is the best for the City. The cost of the "free" Sunday parking is far too high, and in fact, hurts our neighborhood. Like many others, I felt that the aldermen should have been consulted while the terms were being negotiated. Finally, the process itself highlighted the need for an independent budget office.

The Proposed Parking Meter Deal

It is important to understand that the changes to the Parking Meter Deal are a settlement of a costly claim by Chicago Parking Meters (CPM) against the City. CPM alleged that the City must pay \$20 million each year for parking meters that had their hours changed in 2009 and 2010. Our able corporation counsel, Steve Patton, and Chief Financial Officer, Lois Scott, not only fought the claim, but engaged in aggressive litigation and business practices to get the City the most leverage it could have. Thanks to the pressure placed on them, CPM came to the table.

Although the City's legal case was strong, the risk of losing up to \$1 billion (\$20 million/year for 70 years) was apparently a greater motivation. To avoid this, and to obtain "free" Sunday parking, which the Mayor favored, the City traded an unknown, but possibly large amount of revenue from extended hours in all neighborhoods, established a pay by cell option which is only partially capped, and gave CPM almost all of its "reserve" meters.

Neither the City nor CPM would have agreed to the

yourvoice@ward43.org if
you are interested in
learning more.

**43rd Ward
City Sticker Day
this Saturday**

Stop by for some coffee and donuts, and purchase your city stickers right in your ward. You **MUST** bring vehicle registration, photo ID, and your renewal form. If your photo ID does **NOT** show your current address you must bring proof of residence (your lease, mortgage, or a current utility bill - hard copy only). If you do not have a renewal form, you **MUST** bring your state vehicle registration, vehicle title, or insurance card that contains your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).

**43rd Ward
City Sticker Day
Saturday, June 8
9:00am-2:00pm
43rd Ward Office
2523 N. Halsted**

**Business Profile:
Sai Mai Thai Restaurant**

We are so excited about the new Thai restaurant in Lincoln Park! Click here to learn what the most popular item on the menu is and what you should order when you crave something hot and spicy!

**Celebrate the 64th
Annual Old Town Art
Fair This Weekend**

settlement unless each thought it avoided some risk or created some kind of value. While the City's risk is pretty clear, CPM's is less so. CPM may be comforted by the \$4.5 million/year it will get in the settlement, plus it must believe that the trade is justified by the money it will get from extended hours, pay by cell, and the reserve meters, and by the end of the uncertainty caused by the continued warfare between the parties. The City's demand for "free" Sunday parking certainly made the deal more expensive.

Had the aldermen been consulted, the Mayor's office would have learned that many wards, including ours, need paid Sunday parking to ensure turnover at local stores and restaurants. Further, many wards prefer that paid parking end at 9:00pm; it is a good compromise between the businesses and the residents who use metered spaces for overnight parking.

In addition, the loss of the "reserve" meters, meters added to the system since 2008, is significant. Since I've been in office, I occasionally put in a meter (sometimes at a merchant's request) in order to have a little bank of meters when one has to be pulled out for some reason. In this way, I, like many other aldermen, do my part to responsibly administer this very bad contract. Now, this flexibility has been removed.

Over 50% of the meters in the City are in 10 wards, including the 43rd Ward. Aldermanic input could have made this deal smaller, but still revenue neutral - the Mayor's stated goal.

How It Affects the 43rd Ward

Over the past few weeks, I reached out to the residents and local businesses who will be affected by the proposed free Sunday parking in exchange for longer hours during the week. Below is representative of the input I received:

I feel [strongly] these changes will negatively impact the business of Aaron's Apothecary. . . . Clark Street already has parking challenges, as do most other streets in your ward. Specifically, Clark Street's close proximity to the Lakefront, Park, Zoo, etc., attracts people to park their cars as they sit idle while our loyal customers are unable to find parking to access not only our business, but others along Clark Street. . . . Not to mention, DePaul students.

People will park their cars on a business street

See 250 nationally acclaimed artists;
Walk through 60 urban gardens;
Listen to local talent on the music stage;
Stop by the Children's Corner with arts and crafts activities;
Eat at the food court made up of local eateries.

[Click here for more info.](#)

***Saturday and Sunday,
June 8-9:
10:00am-6:00pm
Main gate located at
Lincoln /Wisconsin***

**Stop by the Wells Street
Art Festival This
Weekend**

Wells Street Art Festival is back for its 39th year! Check out an eclectic mix of art from more than 250 artists. [Click here for more information.](#)

***Saturday and Sunday,
June 8-9:
10:00am-10:00pm
N. Wells St. btwn
North/Division***

**Lincoln Park Village
Turns 4!**

This Monday, Lincoln Park Village will hold its 4th Anniversary Benefit at the Chicago History Museum. Join friends and neighbors in a music-filled evening celebrating the growing Lincoln Park Village community and how it is inventing a different future for older adults in Chicago. [Click here to purchase your](#)

Saturday night and not have to move them until Monday morning.

My initial response was sure, free parking on Sundays, but the more I thought about it, I agree it is not a good idea. . . . At the same time, we think that they should not extend the meters to 10pm. The 9pm was already such a money grab. 10pm is just offensive. . . . I hate this whole parking mess we got ourselves into. I'm sure Rahm tried to find a way out of it.

The input I received from my business community and constituents made me even more hesitant to vote in favor of the changes to the Deal.

The Process

The work and effort required to evaluate this transaction is just one example of the difficulty faced by aldermen who try to responsibly evaluate the financial transactions in this City. Unlike Congress and many other city councils, the Chicago City Council has no independent office of financial analysis.

This was especially significant when it came to evaluating the proposed changes to the Parking Meter Deal. I spent weeks scrutinizing the entire transaction. Other aldermen and I demanded [explanations](#) of the transaction from the City. The need for an independent office of budget analysis is increasingly urgent.

This is why I and several other aldermen sponsored an [ordinance](#) to establish such an office. For the rest of this fiscal year, we sought a budget of \$250,000 for the office - the exact amount the administration just spent on one consultant to "independently" evaluate some aspects of the meter deal, which was presented to us on the last day of the hearings. While the [Tribune](#), [Sun-Times](#), and the [Civic Federation](#) endorsed our proposal, the proposed ordinance is languishing in committee.

Going Forward

Ultimately, there is no doubt that the attorneys here negotiated hard and obtained much improved protections that curb some of the most abusive practices of Chicago Parking Meters. And I applaud the administration's willingness to provide information when requested.

ticket and call 773-248-8700 for more information.

**Monday, June 10
5:00pm - 7:30pm
Chicago History
Museum
1601 N. Clark**



43rd Ward Office
2523 N. Halsted
www.ward43.org

Office Hours:
Monday
9 a.m.-7 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday
9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Friday
9 a.m.-12 p.m. & 2 p.m.-6 p.m.

Contact us:
phone
773-348-9500
email
yourvoice@ward43.org

However, I believe that the terms of this transaction are too costly for my Ward and for the City as a whole. That is why I respectfully voted 'no', and why I will be asking the administration to work with me to restore Sunday paid parking and 9:00pm end times for meters in our Ward.

**Save the Date:
Living in a Landmark:
Landmark Guidelines and Incentives**

Do you live in an historic building or in one of our many historic districts? Confused about the rules for renovating or enlarging an historic home? Join our office, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, and the Chicago Landmarks Commission staff for a seminar about historic preservation building guidelines and incentives.

**Saturday, June 22nd
9:00am-11:00am
DePaul School of Music
804 W.Belden
First Floor Recital Hall**

Sincerely,

Michele Smith
43rd Ward Alderman

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to yourvoice@ward43.org by yourvoice@ward43.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Michele Smith | 43rd Ward Alderman | 2523 N. Halsted | Chicago | IL | 60614