

Bears get tax break, but aren't happy

Feel new assessment not in line with other Arlington properties

By Robert McCoppin and A.D. Quig
Chicago Tribune

The Chicago Bears got part of the reduction they wanted in the property tax assessment for their potential new stadium site in Arlington Heights, but lingering questions about the process and result, which left the team “disappointed,” suggest the matter may not be over.

The Cook County Board of Review on Thursday lowered the 2023 assessment for the former Arlington International Racecourse to \$125 million from the \$192 million that the Cook County assessor had set. That could result in a one-year tax of about \$10 million.

The night before the board’s ruling Board of Review Commissioner Samantha Steele released to the Tribune what she said was the board analysts’ proposed valuation of \$138 million that, according to her, had tentative agreement among the commissioners.

After that news broke the other two commissioners, George Cardenas and Larry Rogers, voted to lower the assessment to \$125 million.

Cardenas said the \$138 million was not final, and that he followed the findings of the certified analysts to render a decision that was fair for all parties, based on comparable land values in the area.

Tensions between Steele and the board’s other members have simmered in recent months.

Rogers has served on the board since 2004, while Cardenas and Steele took office in late 2022. Cardenas and Rogers have generally been allies of late, agreeing on valuations and office operations, and together have the power to outvote Steele.

On Friday the board’s general counsel and ethics officer, Cristin Duffy, wrote a letter to attorneys for the Bears and local schools, thanking them for bringing the matter to her attention.

Duffy called Steele’s communication with the media “premature and inappropriate,” saying it “gives the appearance of impropriety, and infringes on the due process rights of the parties that appear before the CCBOR.”

“No commissioner should appear to leverage the decision in a case,” wrote Duffy, who’s a former prosecutor and judicial

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Family calls for criminal charges

The family of an assistant principal who was shot and killed inside a residential building in the Loop is calling on Chicago police and the Cook County state’s attorney’s office to press criminal charges against the alleged gunman. **Chicagoland, Page 3**



Wicks begins quest for spot in rotation

Cubs left-hander Jordan Wicks is part of the competition to open the season as the Cubs’ fifth starter. **Chicago Sports**



Backers of the “Bring Chicago Home” referendum proposal object to the outcome of a hearing at the Richard J. Daley Center in Chicago on Friday. **TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

‘Bring Chicago Home’ ballot initiative invalidated by judge

Ruling comes as setback for Johnson, puts homelessness referendum in doubt

By A.D. Quig
Chicago Tribune

Mayor Brandon Johnson’s cornerstone initiative to tackle homelessness through a referendum question on the March 19 ballot was invalidated by a Cook County judge on Friday as she sided with business and real estate interests who oppose the measure.

The ruling by Judge Kathleen Burke places the future of the

“Bring Chicago Home” referendum in significant doubt, while an appeal of the ruling is considered and the business groups who sued to stop the referendum celebrate the ruling. The referendum question is still on Chicago ballots, but any votes on it made through mail-in or early voting won’t be counted for the time being.

In the meantime, the decision delivers a stinging setback for Johnson and his progressive backers, who hoped to rally voters

to pass the referendum next month and trigger a tax hike on higher-priced property sales that would raise an estimated \$100 million a year for various homeless services.

The lawsuit — filed in January by real estate interests and other corporate leaders in Chicago who think the new tax structure will harm the city’s business and real estate industry — was filed as part of the real estate lobby’s attempts to stymie Johnson’s bid to deliver on a key campaign pledge. The suit was technically filed against the Chicago Board of Elections, which had already printed the

referendum on ballots. Burke also denied a motion from the Johnson administration to intervene in the case.

Both the city and the Board of Elections could appeal Burke’s decision, which followed a lengthy hearing in which she painstakingly read through the case’s filings for more than two hours before delivering her decision. Following the hearing, members of the Bring Chicago Home coalition stood up and chanted “68K need a place to stay!” a reference to the number

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Chicago police Superintendent Larry Snelling addresses the Chicago Police Board about officer wellness during a meeting at police headquarters on Thursday. **JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Top cop lashes out after COPA recommends firing 28 officers

Snelling: Investigators leaning on ‘personal opinions, speculation’

By Sam Charles
Chicago Tribune

Despite a freeze on police discipline cases, the superintendent of the Chicago Police Department late Thursday issued a lengthy, stern critique of the city agency that probes police misconduct, accusing investigators of leaning on “personal opinions and speculation.”

That leads to unfairness, Superintendent Larry Snelling said.

“When we speculate, when we add our personal opinions, then those penalties become punitive and unfair and unfair to the officers,” Snelling said. “What we’re seeing are egregious penalties for extremely minor infractions. Now, oftentimes when I go through these reports, I agree that the infraction should have been sustained, but a 30-day (or) 90-day suspension is egregious.”

In the last eight weeks,

the Civilian Office of Police Accountability has recommended the Police Department fire 28 officers — an “unprecedented” number, CPD’s top attorney told the Chicago Police Board. But the avalanche of new disciplinary cases now sitting with Snelling is a byproduct of the City Council’s decision to approve most of the new CPD union contract last year — unanimously, without a single question posed to city negotiators.

The latest case findings and recommendations from COPA

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US, EU slap new sanctions on Russia

Biden says penalties in response to ‘brutal war,’ Navalny’s death

By Fatima Hussein and Lorne Cook
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States and European Union heaped hundreds of new sanctions Friday on Russia in connection with the second anniversary of its invasion of Ukraine and in retaliation for the death of noted Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny last week in an Arctic penal colony.

The U.S. government imposed roughly 600 new sanctions on Russia and its war machine in the largest single round of penalties since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

The EU, for its part, added sanctions on several foreign companies over allegations that they have exported dual-use goods to Russia that could be used in its war against Ukraine. The 27-nation bloc also targeted scores of Russian officials, including members of the judiciary, local politicians and people it said were “responsible for the illegal deportation and military re-education of Ukrainian children.”

President Joe Biden said the

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