

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Bears reach Arlington Heights tax deal

Team says constructing new lakefront stadium in Chicago remains its focus

By **Jeremy Gorner**
and **Robert McCoppin**
Chicago Tribune

As the Chicago Bears continue to face massive hurdles in Springfield over plans to build a domed stadium next to Soldier Field, the team said Monday it has reached an agreement over property taxes

for the 326 acres of land it owns in Arlington Heights that has tripped up plans to build a new stadium in the northwest suburb.

Team officials said they had agreed on a memorandum of understanding involving the amount of taxes to be paid for the former site of the Arlington International Racecourse. The village

and local school boards still need to approve the agreement, which could happen next month. While it does not guarantee the team will build a stadium in Arlington Heights, the deal does shift some momentum back toward the suburban site and keeps the team's options more open than before.

"The Chicago Bears remain focused on investing over \$2 billion to build a publicly owned enclosed stadium on Chicago's lakefront while reevaluating the feasibility of a development in Bronzeville,"

Bears officials said in a team statement released Monday. "That being said, we remain significant landowners in Arlington Heights and establishing a framework for potential future development planning, financing and property tax certainty has been a priority since the land was purchased. We continue to have productive conversations with the village and school districts and are aligned on a framework should we choose to explore a potential development."

Details of the deal were not

released Monday. The Bears and the suburban taxing districts have been at loggerheads over the valuation of the Arlington Heights property, which the Cook County Board of Review set at about \$125 million. The Bears have countered with appraisals ranging from \$60 million to \$71 million and categorizing the property as vacant residential land, which gets taxed at 10% of market value. Local school officials have said the land should

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Consent decree spots to be filled

Johnson plans to restore positions in police budget

By **Alice Yin** and **A.D. Quig**
Chicago Tribune

Mayor Brandon Johnson said Monday he planned to restore scores of unfilled Chicago Police Department positions tasked with implementing the federal consent decree into the 2025 city budget following weeks of backlash that his plans to cut those vacant jobs would endanger police reform efforts.

In a statement, the mayor's office said Johnson would introduce a budget amendment adding back the 162 vacancies he originally slashed in next year's budget plan — jobs spread throughout the Police Department, including the offices of constitutional policing and community policing. The U-turn is the latest instance of the mayor reversing course on a controversial provision in next year's budget, which faces a \$1 billion hole, including backing down on an original proposal for a \$300 million property tax hike.

"My administration is taking significant steps forward to fully support the implementation of CPD's consent decree reforms and ensure effective constitutional policing," Johnson said in the statement. "The investments we are making in our balanced budget reflect our commitment to improving community policing and a better, stronger, safer Chicago. We see progress in key areas. As I have always said, we have a commitment to reform, and we will continue to make the investments to fund our obligations under the consent decree."

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul had warned Johnson that the mayor's move to slash those roles would risk the city "being held in contempt of court for failing to comply" with the order, according to a copy of

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MICHAEL MADIGAN TRIAL



Former Ald. Daniel Solis arrives at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Chicago on Monday. **ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Massages, affairs and a suitcase of cash in China

Soap-opera life of former Ald. Solis front and center in corruption case

By **Jason Meisner**
and **Megan Crepeau**
Chicago Tribune

Chicago Ald. Daniel Solis had been secretly cooperating with the FBI for more than a year when he received an unexpected voice-mail that surely caught the attention of agents listening in from the wire room.

"Danny, it's Mike Madigan," said the unmistakable voice on the June 2017 message. "Would you call?"

It turned out the power-

ful Democratic House speaker wanted Solis to set up a meeting where he could pitch the developers of a West Loop condo building in Solis' 25th Ward on hiring his private law firm to do real estate tax appeals, according to testimony Monday in Madigan's federal corruption trial.

Solis called the speaker's law firm two minutes later. On the call, played for the jury in court, the alderman waited on hold for a moment while the ominous classical piece "Hall of the Mountain King" played in the background.

Madigan then picked up and asked about the development.

"Do you know the developer?" Solis said, seeming somewhat surprised in the speaker's interest. "Do you know the, uh, people there?"

"No, but I'd like to," Madigan responded.

Madigan's out-of-the-blue request, which came at a time when Solis' undercover work was focused on then-Ald. Edward Burke, took the investigation in a new direction and helped lead to one of the central allegations of

the case: that Madigan used the power and influence of his public office to squeeze developers for business for his private law firm.

The alleged West Loop scheme was just one facet of a blockbuster six hours of testimony Monday from Solis, the prosecution's star witness who spent his first full day on the witness stand taking the jury through his own legal and personal issues and his unprecedented decision to flip and go undercover for the feds.

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Celebrating Thanksgiving safely

For those preparing to celebrate Thanksgiving with family, friends and festive food, the Illinois Department of Public Health has released tips for staying healthy and safe during the holiday. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

A delicious 'bah' and 'humbug'

"A Christmas Carol," running at the Goodman Theatre through Dec. 30, has a new Scrooge, and the Tribune's Chris Jones writes that he's an inspired choice. **Arts & Living**

Filings seek to drop two Trump cases



Special counsel Jack Smith speaks during a news conference in Washington. **DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES 2023**

Special counsel cites Justice Dept. policy barring prosecution

By **Alanna Durkin Richer**,
Eric Tucker and
Chris Megerian
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Special counsel Jack Smith moved to abandon two criminal cases against President-elect Donald Trump on Monday, acknowledging that Trump's return to the White House will preclude attempts to federally prosecute him for retaining classified documents or trying to overturn his 2020 election defeat.

The decision was inevitable,

since longstanding Justice Department policy says sitting presidents cannot face criminal prosecution. Yet it was still a momentous finale to an unprecedented chapter in political and law enforcement history, as federal officials attempted to hold accountable a former president while he was simultaneously running for another term.

Trump emerges indisputably victorious, having successfully delayed the investigations through legal maneuvers and then winning reelection despite indictments that described his actions as a threat to the country's constitutional foundations.

"I persevered, against all odds,

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