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We promote prosperity, progress and peace in the neighborhoods we serve.

We intend to champion homeowners, locally owned and operated small businesses and professional practices, schools, libraries, parks, houses of worship and more.

We also strongly support efforts to prevent crime and make our neighborhoods safer.

We cheerfully assist and promote members of our business and professional community, particularly those that are independent, locally owned and which hire local residents.

This online news service is owned and operated by lifelong Southwest Siders Joan Hadac (Editor and Publisher) and Tim Hadac (Managing Editor), both of whom have worked as local newspaper reporters and editors for over 25 years each.

Do you have a news tip, big or small? A letter to the editor? Want us to come out and cover your event? Let us know: editor@swchicagopost.com.

THURSDAY, JULY 12, 2018

Tabares Begins Her Duties as Alderman

Focusing on service, public safety, economic development

By Joan Hadac
Editor and Publisher
Southwest Chicago Post

The Southwest Side is home to Chicago's newest alderman, and she is pledging to be a bridge builder who gets things done.

Silvana Tabares says that she plans to focus on economic development in the 23rd Ward, as well as public safety—but first on direct constituent services.

Appointed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and sworn in late last month, the 38-year-old Tabares said that "first and foremost" she wants to ensure a ward office that is "responsive and efficient" to requests large and small.

That matters to most Southwest Siders, especially in a city where there is no shortage of tales—accurate or not–of indifferent or even rude bureaucrats answering phones and staffing front counters at ward offices.

As a state representative serving the 21st District—which includes the westernmost section of Garfield Ridge—Tabares has led a constituent service operation since she took office in 2013. But there are differences.

"Nobody calls a state rep to get a pothole filled or a tree trimmed," she noted. "An aldermanic office serves the same legislative issues function as a state rep, but it's much more. There is a lot more direct contact with constituents, a lot more basic needs to be met. That's our challenge [at the ward office]."



Silvana Tabares smiles at her husband, Sean, and infant son, Michael, as she is sworn in.

Tabares was born in Little Village and raised by her mother, Raquel—a single mom--in Brighton Park. She attended St. Pancratius School and later graduated from Immaculate Conception School.

She is a 1997 graduate of Lourdes High School and later earned an associate's degree from Daley College before studying journalism at Columbia College.

"My mom worked very hard and sacrificed so much—just so I could get ahead," she said. "I am very proud of her."

Like many across the Southwest Side, Tabares is the first in her family to graduate college. She also is the first woman ever--and the first Hispanic person ever--to serve as alderman of a ward west of Midway Airport.

After college, Tabares worked several media-related internships before landing a job at the Extra bilingual newspaper. She served as editor of the paper.

"As a newspaper editor, I reported on a wide variety of issues—and the issues were what drew me to running for state rep, because I got tired of staying on the sidelines as a reporter," Tabares said. "I wanted to go down to Springfield and vote on issues that affected the communities that I represented—especially public safety and education."

As a journalist Tabares was familiar with introducing herself to people and hearing what they had to say. It was a skill that served her well as a public servant.

"I continue to do that," she said. "I've knocked on a lot of doors and met a lot of people. I enjoy it."

Meeting people, she said, has given her more empathy with their struggles. She tells the tale of two constituents in Stickney--a man and his wife who worked for a social service agency that helped people with disabilities but had been thrown into hard times because of the years-long state budget stalemate.

"I went down to Springfield to help people, especially people with disabilities, seniors and veterans—and for the governor to kind of ignore all that…it just made me want to keep on fighting," she said.

As a legislator, Tabares has been a close ally of House Speaker Michael J. Madigan (D-22nd)—a political relationship that has brought some criticism from a few who claim that Madigan's muscle essentially engineered her installation as alderman. Tabares brushed off the claims.

"My style as an elected official is to work with everyone," she said. "I won't get anything done by attacking elected officials in nearby districts… by making enemies. My focus is always on what we can accomplish for the people we serve. I think that's what people want."

Beyond the struggles of partisan politics, Tabares said one of the rewarding aspects of her time at the state capital was "meeting with constituents who make time to go down to Springfield and advocate for what's important to them, like their schools. You have mothers who take the time to go down to advocate for their schools. I found that encouraging."

Tabares and her husband, Sean, have lived in Garfield Ridge for the last seven years—first in a home near Archer and Nottingham and then since 2015 in a house in St. Daniel the Prophet Parish. Today, she's in a happy "baby makes three" situation—as she and her husband raise their infant son, Michael.

"Garfield Ridge is a great place to live, work and raise a family," she noted, saying she wants to bring that kind of feeling to the rest of the ward.

She has already met with Chicago Lawn (8th) District Commander Ronald Pontecore to discuss public safety issues, and she has met or will meet with the Garfield Ridge Chamber of Commerce, the United Business Association of Midway, the Gateway to Midway Committee, the Archer Heights Civic Association and other neighborhood groups—to hear their concerns and outline her vision for the ward.

Economic development is at the top of her agenda.

"I want Archer Avenue—and the rest of the ward—to be a place where people turn first when they want to shop or have dinner," she said. "Too many of us look to La Grange or other suburbs when we go out and spend money. We need to attract businesses here, especially the type of businesses that will attract other businesses."

An appointed alderman for now, Tabares will run for election in 2019.

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Posted by Southwest Chicago Post at 5:53 PM

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