Early-voting site back in Clearing

Tabares' action gets results with Board of Elections

By Tim Hadac

Without comment last week, officials at the Chicago Board of Elections indicated that the 23rd Ward's early-voting site will be located at Dore School, 7134 W. 65th St.

The move was made after 23rd Ward Ald. Silvana Tabares objected to a CBOE plan to move the early-voting site from its traditional home at the Clearing Branch Library to a site east of the airport.



Tabares

The initial switch was made because Board of Elections officials are not using public libraries as early-voting sites this year because they have "a state mandated limit of 25 people that can be in the [library] building. If the early voting were taking place, the library would have to be closed to the public for two weeks," one CPL librarian told the Clear-Ridge Reporter & NewsHound.

In a letter sent late last month to CBOE Executive Director Lance Gough, Tabares complained about she called an "unfair" and "last-minute switch" to Richardson Middle School, 6018 S. Karlov, "which is almost five miles away via car. The 13th Ward early voting location is less than one mile away from Richardson, which seems

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redundant and disproportionally disenfranchises the many residents who live west of Cicero Avenue."

The alderman noted that in the presidential election of 2016, 4,925 people who live west of Cicero Avenue utilized early voting.

In a pandemic year, the desire for early voting is expected to increase dramatically and shatter all records, as voters avoid Election Day (Tuesday, Nov. 3) lines at polls.

"It is unfair their early voting location was changed without any warning," Tabares had complained. "Voters will be turned away from the Clearing Library and will not have adequate time or means to go to Richardson Middle School, and many of these residents will be seniors. I understand the need to provide enough space for social distancing. That is why I believe it is misguided to change a location and thereby forcing senior citizens who would normally walk to their early voting location to use public transportation, placing themselves in greater risk of contracting COVID-19."



The early-voting site at Dore—like 49 other ward-based early-voting sites across the city, will open on Wednesday, Oct. 14. Hours are scheduled to be 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, and 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day (Tuesday, Nov. 3).

Voters may cast ballots at any of the sites—not just the site in their home ward. For a list of all 50 ward-based early voting sites, visit chicagoelections.gov.

Every voter is encouraged to wear a facemask that covers the mouth and nose. Voters in line must practice social distancing with 6 feet of space between people in line.

Any ballots that voters cast in early-voting are final. After casting ballots, voters may not return to amend, change or undo a ballot for any reason. It is a felony to vote more than once -- or to attempt to vote more than once -- in the same election.

Government-issued photo ID is not required but is helpful if there is a question about the voter's registration, address, signature or if there are two voters at the same address with the same names or similar names.

Each early-voting site will also have what CBOE officials are calling secure drop boxes where people voting by mail may drop off their ballots—if they do not want to drop their signed and sealed ballot in a regular U.S. Postal Service mailbox.