



# DISTRICT COUNCILS

COMMUNITY COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## **District Council 007 Public Meeting**

**Date:** February 18, 2026

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** Lindbloom Park Field House, 6054 South Damen Place, Chicago, IL

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## **Attendance and Opening**

**Chairperson:** Teresa Chandler

**Council Members Present at Roll Call:** Teresa Chandler, Dion McGill

**Joseph Williams:** Arrived shortly after roll call.

**Quorum:** Established with two members; full council present shortly thereafter

**CPD Representation:** No representative present

**Attendees:** 20

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## **1. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the January 21, 2026, meeting were approved without discussion.

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## **2. Introductions**

Attendees represented the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 17th Wards.

Residents, community partners, and stakeholders introduced themselves and shared their affiliations.

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## **3. Community Partner Presentation**

### **Block by Block of Auburn Gresham**

**Presenter:** Cynthia Love

## **Organizational Overview**

Block by Block of Auburn Gresham is a grassroots community engagement organization active in the 6th, 7th, and 8th District Council areas. The organization partners with local aldermen and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA).

## **Core Focus Areas**

- Housing resource linkage (grants, repairs, wealth building)
- Property transfer education (wills, legal transfers to prevent loss and blight)
- Property tax assistance (exemptions and appeals)
- Flood and disaster assistance (navigation with IEMA, insurance support, volunteer remediation)
- Senior home repair and improvement assistance
- Neighborhood beautification (block cleanups, volunteer coordination, events)
- Event-based engagement to promote positive community perception and collective action

## **Recent Initiatives**

- Responded to severe flooding on Chicago's South and West Sides with volunteer teams assisting uninsured or underinsured residents.
- Planning a monthly "Home Economics" educational series (launching in warmer months) covering homeownership, wealth-building, and neighborhood investment topics.
- Active social media presence:
  - Facebook: "Block by Block of Auburn Gresham."
  - Instagram: @blockbyblockag

## **Volunteer Engagement**

- Entirely volunteer-driven operations.
- Residents encouraged to participate (as little as one hour per month).
- Emphasis on open collaboration and partnership.

## **Partnership Offer**

- Open to partnerships with local organizations.
- Interest in collaborating on youth engagement pilots or citywide initiatives.

## **Community Impact**

- Connects residents to city grants.
- Provides direct support for at-risk properties.
- Hosts numerous events in collaboration with aldermen and block clubs.

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## **4. Public Comments and Discussion**

### **Property Upkeep and Cleanups**

Residents emphasized pride in maintaining curb appeal and block conditions.

Suggestions included:

- Identifying and empowering residents who already maintain their blocks.
- Amplifying efforts block-by-block rather than only community-wide.
- Improving coordination with aldermen regarding trash, vacant buildings, and responsiveness.

Council members encouraged residents to:

- Document issues with photos.
- Communicate directly with aldermen.
- Serve as the “eyes and ears” for officials.

### **District Council Role**

Council members reaffirmed their role as:

- Liaisons between residents and city agencies.
- Support channels for safety-adjacent issues, not solely police relations.

Dion McGill and Joseph Williams encouraged reporting of all safety-related concerns.

### **Youth Pilot Concept**

Discussion included a potential city-backed youth employment and cleanup pilot program operating seasonally or year-round.

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## **5. Public Safety Trends and Community Concerns**

The Council facilitated discussion regarding crime patterns, loitering, and neighborhood safety.

### **Key Themes**

### **Loitering & Social Gatherings**

- Some concerns about nuisance or safety.
- Positive relationship-building cited as a successful mitigation strategy.
- Example shared of converting alley “hangouts” into informal block watch support.

### **Vacant Property Monitoring**

- Importance of tracking vacant homes.
- Coordination with police, block clubs, and city agencies.
- Use of group texts and collective 311 reporting.

### **Quality of Life Concerns**

- Trash, streetlights, building maintenance, and package theft.
- Coordinated neighborhood response to porch piracy.
- Businesses are responsive to concerns about novelty toy guns doubling as lighters.

### **Community Communication Networks**

- Strong block-level communication is viewed as replacing discontinued citywide ShotSpotter technology.

### **Warmer Weather Planning**

- Anticipated increase in pop-up parties and block events requiring coordination.

### **Strategic Plan Engagement**

Residents were encouraged to review CPD District Strategic Plans and provide feedback on whether the listed priorities reflect lived experience.

The Council will relay concerns to the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (CCPSA).

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## **6. Council Member Reports**

### **Dion McGill**

#### **Community & Policy Engagement**

- Attended Englewood Quality of Life Initiative (EQLI) kickoff.
- Participated in CCPSA meetings, particularly regarding CPD-ICE collaboration.

- Authored a transparency proposal (with Live Free Illinois) on CPD clearance rates, adopted as a CCPSA priority.
- Monitored mayoral and aldermanic executive orders related to policing and federal agent accountability.

### **Transit & Infrastructure Advocacy**

- Engaged in transit equity discussions and redesign proposals to improve pedestrian, bike, and bus safety.

### **RIFLE Act**

- Discussed proposed state legislation targeting firearm manufacturer liability fees.
- Portion of fees would support violence prevention organizations (e.g., Target Area, TRP).
- Encouraged advocacy with state representatives.

### **CCPSA Open Seats**

- 53 applications received (2 youth, 1 adult positions).
- Explained the selection process.

### **Technology**

- Adoption of “Reach” software for meeting reminders and communication.

### **Public Engagement**

- Encouraged residents to participate in canvassing and outreach.

## **Joseph Williams**

### **Community Engagement**

- Visited Gary Comer schools and Englewood businesses.
- Advocated for expanded year-round youth employment.
- Supported major local events (Miracle on 63rd, MLK Day events, senior Valentine’s brunch, coat giveaways).
- Hosted tax and finance information sessions for seniors.

### **Public Safety Initiatives**

- Direct engagement with businesses to reduce loitering and solicitation.

- Advocated for 24-hour Community-Based Intervention (CBI) coverage.
- Raised concerns regarding gun buyback program effectiveness.
- Followed up on critical incidents (e.g., fire at 54th & Ashland Masonic Hall).

### **Business & Property Accountability**

- Routine check-ins with local businesses.
- Coordination with block clubs, aldermen, and Cook County Land Bank on vacant property security and transition.
- Reported suspected sex trafficking concerns where applicable.

### **Outreach & Inclusion**

- Emphasized canvassing diverse demographic groups, including Asian residents who may have safety concerns.
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## **7. Commission and Agency Updates**

### **COPA (Civilian Office of Police Accountability)**

- Interim Chief Lakenya White confirmed as permanent leader.
- COPA “Public Academy” introduced for residents to learn about oversight investigations.

### **Annual Goals (CPD, COPA, Police Board)**

- Proposed and accepted by CCPSA.
- Residents encouraged to review publicly available goals.

### **Workforce Allocation Study**

- Executive summary released; full report forthcoming.
- Recommendation to hire more civilian staff to reduce CPD overtime and improve effectiveness.
- Noted connection between officer workload, mental health, and accountability.

### **Restorative Justice Courts**

- Youth firearm possession (non-violent) cases are eligible again for diversion.
- Active sites include Englewood, Albany Park, North Lawndale, Auburn Gresham, and Rogers Park.
- Englewood session held on Thursdays at the Salvation Army.

- Residents encouraged to observe or volunteer.
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## Action Items

1. **Review CPD District Strategic Plans**
    - Residents to compare plans with lived experience and provide feedback at the next meeting.
  2. **Community Reporting**
    - Document and report local issues (trash, vacant buildings, property crime).
    - Council to escalate concerns as appropriate.
  3. **Block by Block Collaboration**
    - Support cleanups and outreach.
    - Explore formal youth engagement initiatives.
  4. **Canvassing & Outreach**
    - Connect with Dion McGill for door-to-door engagement.
    - Expand outreach to seniors, hesitant residents, and non-English speakers.
  5. **CBI Program Reform**
    - Advocate for expanded late-night and weekend coverage.
    - Improve coordination and accountability.
  6. **Restorative Justice Engagement**
    - Encourage attendance and volunteer participation at Englewood sessions.
  7. **Youth Employment Advocacy**
    - Continue pressing for year-round job expansion.
  8. **Vacant Property Monitoring**
    - Ongoing coordination with Cook County Land Bank and city agencies.
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## Follow-Up Items

- **RIFLE Act Information Session**
    - Dr. Anthony Douglas (University of Chicago) to host informational session.
  - **Strategic Plan Review**
    - Continued discussion at the March meeting.
  - **Restorative Justice Updates**
    - Engagement plan update in March.
  - **Vacant Property Program Development**
    - Explore rapid repair and safe management models.
  - **CBI & Gun Policy Advocacy**
    - Continued updates at future meetings.
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## **Next Meeting**

**Date:** March 18, 2026

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** Ogden Park Field House

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## **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.