

# 2023-2024 Year In Review



## Dear Neighbors,

This past Wednesday, May 15th marked one year since I began serving as your Alderman. It's an honor to represent this vibrant community. Reflecting on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to work alongside all of you to address our neighborhood's needs and celebrate shared successes.



01

## Early Initiatives

I started my term with purpose - introducing **7 ordinances on day one**, including **lowering speed limits** to increase walkability and **cutting red tape to open personal services businesses** (nail salons, beauty shops, barber shops, etc). In the first months of my term I also launched my community **advisory councils**, approved a 38-unit affordable housing development at 835 W Addison, voted to **expand outdoor dining**, to **fund sidewalk snow plowing** as a municipal service, and **marched in my first Pride parade** as Alderman with my incredible husband Pete by my side.



02

## Recent Work

Together, we've seen progress recently as well, from the repair and **cleanup of the Belmont station**, to **renovating Evergreen Playlot**, to passing an ordinance to **financially stabilize our LGBTQ+ senior housing**. I am also proud to say that we had a safe and successful Cubs Opening Day by coordinating with CPD, and we have added additional city **cameras and license plate readers** in the neighborhood to enhance safety longterm.

Office of 44th Alderman Bennett R. Lawson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bennett Lawson".



03

## Community Engagement

We've enhanced community engagement by launching our **advisory councils**, a new community calendar, public safety webpage, interactive beat map, and court advocacy program. My staff and I also **personally shoveled each curb in the ward in April**. We also engaged with you through events - hosting the Wrigley Field annual community meeting and the **Senior Picnic**, launched a new '**Kids Bike Parade**' down Broadway celebrating the end of the summer season, holding **property tax appeals workshops**, and helping neighbors recycle **400+ trees** through our annual holiday tree pickup.



04

## Supporting Local Businesses

I have advocated for our local business community by co-sponsoring legislation to cut red tape for businesses. These ordinances aim to make it **easier for restaurants and bars to expand their outdoor dining**, and reduce fines and legal fees in the permit application process. I also voted to make outdoor dining programs permanent and to allow the sale of liquor and expanded events days on rooftops near Wrigley Field. We were fortunate to have many businesses choose to make their home in our neighborhood this past year, and I look forward to pushing ahead policies to make opening a business in Lakeview as easy as possible.



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## Legislative Accomplishments

Citywide, we passed a budget that included **\$76M for youth programming** and jobs, **doubling 911 mental health response staff**, funding **\$200M in anti-violence programs**, creating a **Department of the Environment**, and **increasing CPD's detectives**. It was a busy legislative year in City Council - passing the '**Chi vs Hate**' ordinance to create a 'Hate Incident' reporting category in the city's 311 system, co-sponsoring an ordinance to **fine offenders up to \$1,000 for posting hate speech fliers** in response to antisemitic pamphlets placed on the North Side, creating a **city compost pilot program**, **voting against high-profile police misconduct cases being adjudicated behind closed doors**, confirming CPD Superintendent Larry Snelling, and honoring the life of Beth Murphy of Murphy's Bleachers with a commemorative street sign at Sheffield and Waveland.

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## Constituent Services

My office has also been working hard to serve you day-to-day - with our small but mighty staff of four solving **16,000+ constituent requests by email**, and **19,000+ by phone** in the past year. We have filled potholes, trimmed trees, resurfaced alleys, unclogged drains, conducted rat abatement, repaired traffic lights, replaced broken garbage cans, cleaned our streets, supported small businesses, assisted crime victims, and more - and it is our privilege to do so.



07

## Looking Ahead

There is still more exciting work to do and I am hopeful about what is in store for the future. Chairing the Zoning committee, I am committed to thoughtful planning and supporting gentle density for our neighborhood. I look forward to completing our **new dog park with \$100,000 in funding from my office**, and securing passage of the 'ADU' ordinance to **transform housing supply** in Chicago by making it easier to build Accessible Dwelling Units such as coach houses and attic/basement units. In the coming months and years we will also complete construction of a 232-bed wing of the new wing of Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, and move forward with community feedback on the proposed development at 925 W Belmont.

This year has been one of growth, learning, and deepening connections within Lakeview, and I am excited for what the future holds.

[See here](#) for a gallery of our year in 44.

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