



NEWS HUMBOLDT PARK POLITICS

Ald. Roberto Maldonado withdraws from race for Chicago City Council

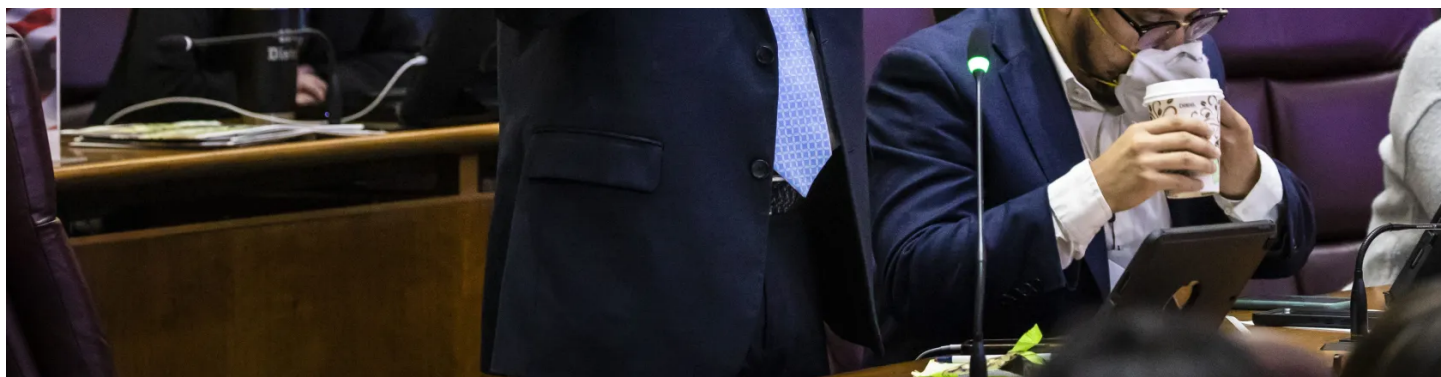
Ald. Maldonado (26th) becomes the 16th member of the Council not seeking reelection. He has served on the Council since 2009, when he was appointed by Mayor Richard M. Daley.

By Fran Spielman | Jan 6, 2023, 5:44pm CST



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Ald. Roberto Maldonado (26th) at a Chicago City Council meeting in November. | Ashlee Rezin/Sun-Times

The Chicago City Council is losing yet another member.

Ald. Roberto Maldonado (26th) on Friday filed paperwork with the Chicago Board of Elections to withdraw his candidacy for the 26th Ward seat. Maldonado has served on the Council since being appointed by Mayor Richard M. Daley in 2009.

Of the Council members seated after the last municipal election, in 2019, Maldonado now is the 16th who won't be there when the new Council convenes after this year's election.

Maldonado did not immediately return phone calls Friday afternoon seeking comment on his decision.

Maldonado's departure leaves five candidates in the race: Julian Perez, Jessica Fuentes, Kirk J. Ortiz, Anthony N. Rivera and Angee Gonzalez Rodriguez. The current Northwest Side ward includes parts of the Humboldt Park and Logan Square communities, among others. The new map covers some of that area but stretches further west, across Cicero Avenue, taking in parts of Belmont Cragin.

In recent years, Maldonado had argued against using an independent commission to draw ward boundaries when the Council went through redistricting.

Maldonado also was among the sponsors of a measure to dramatically increase demolition fees along the Bloomingdale Trail, commonly known as the 606, in an attempt to slow development in the area. The trail's popularity has sparked efforts to build new housing — or replace existing housing — along the route, spurring fears of gentrification.

At the time, in 2017, a study by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University found that housing prices west of Western Avenue increased by 48.2% percent after ground was broken on the 2.7-mile-long urban oasis. The converted elevated freight line has become a mecca for cyclists, skaters, runners and pedestrians. Housing prices east of the trail are up by nearly 14%.



Ald. Roberto Maldonado (26th) speaks with Mayor Lori Lightfoot during a Chicago City Council meeting at City Hall in December. | Ashlee Rezin/Sun-Times

In 2015, Maldonado successfully backed licensing for pushcart vendors in the city. The

measure was drafted by pushcart vendors and their legal advocates.

“At a time when the national debate has turned towards demeaning our immigrant population, we must strengthen our laws to bring our immigrants and entrepreneurs out of the shadows and give them the respect and legitimacy they deserve,” Maldonado told his colleagues at the time, projecting the city’s take at \$2 million-to-\$8 million-a-year.

Other Council members who have left in recent months or announced they will not seek reelection:

Not seeking reelection: Leslie Hairston (5th); Susan Sadlowski Garza (10th); Ed Burke (14th); Howard Brookins (21st); Ariel Reboyras (30th); Carrie Austin (34th); Tom Tunney (44th); James Cappleman (46th); Harry Osterman (48th).

Already resigned: Convicted Ald. Patrick Daley Thompson (11th); Michael Scott Jr. (24th); Michele Smith (43rd); George Cardenas (12th) has resigned after winning a seat on the Cook County Board of Review, and his chief of staff, Anabel Abarca, has been appointed to replace him.

Giving up Council seats to run for mayor: Sophia King (4th); Roderick Sawyer (6th). Ald. Ray Lopez (15th) filed to run for mayor, but dropped out of that race and is seeking reelection to the Council.

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