



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 24-4096, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF COMMISSIONER DENNIS DEER

WHEREAS, Dennis Deer, born on August 7, 1972, and raised in the North Lawndale neighborhood of Chicago, dedicated his life to public service and the betterment of his community; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deer pursued his education at Collins High School in Chicago, and subsequently at Jackson State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary/Special Education and a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Psychology; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deer became interested in studying behavioral health after witnessing a murder at the age of 10 and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, leading him to later obtain his Ph.D. in Christian Psychology from Agape Theological Institute. He also earned certifications as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, forensic counselor, rehabilitation counselor, corrective thinking therapist, and Illinois law enforcement standards and training instructor; and

WHEREAS, Dennis Deer served as the President of County Commissioner Robert Steele's fundraising committee, considering Commissioner Steele a mentor, and following Steele's passing in 2017, he ran for and won the primary and the general election unopposed on November 6, 2018, to serve as the Cook County Commissioner for the 2nd District; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deer faithfully represented the 2nd District, including portions of the Loop, Near West Side, Near South Side, North Lawndale, Englewood, and Washington Park community areas, from 2017 until his untimely passing on June 23, 2024; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, Commissioner Deer served on multiple committees of both the Board of Commissioners and the Forest Preserve District Board, contributing significantly to the governance and improvement of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deer was initially appointed to the Cook County Health Board (CCB) in 2017 to fill a partial term and continued to be re-elected to the seat to date; and

WHEREAS, he was appointed Chair of the County Board's Health and Hospitals Committee in December 2018; pursuant to County ordinance, that committee chair shall also serve as a Director on the Cook County Health Board, so his Cook County Health Board membership began in December 2018; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deer was elected Vice Chair of the Cook County Health Board in 2021, and has been re-elected to that position each year since; and

WHEREAS, in addition to serving as Cook County Health Board Vice Chair since 2021, he has served as a member of the Audit and Compliance Committee and Finance Committee for the entirety of his time on the Cook County Health Board; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deer was the Vice Chair of the Forest Preserves of Cook County's Finance Committee and

was a strong supporter of the 2022 referendum to secure additional resources for the Forest Preserves of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deer placed an emphasis on the health and wellness benefits that the Forest Preserves of Cook County offered residents, and was appointed by President Preckwinkle to the board of NeighborSpace, which preserves gardens on behalf of community groups in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deer was a strong supporter of the Forest Preserves of Cook County and had an affinity for the Brookfield Zoo and Chicago Botanic Garden, consistently raising awareness for the Chicago Botanic Garden's Farm on Ogden, which was located across the street from his district office; and

WHEREAS, Dennis Deer was a devoted husband to his wife, Barbara, and a loving father to their three (3) children; Kannan, Kaleb, and Trinity and a respected member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity; and

WHEREAS, despite facing significant health challenges, including a diagnosis of COVID-19 in 2022, polymyositis, interstitial lung disease, and undergoing a double lung transplant, Commissioner Deer remained committed to his duties and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners recognizes and deeply appreciates the dedication, leadership, and contributions of Dennis Deer to the community and his unwavering commitment to public service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby honor and celebrate the life and legacy of Commissioner Dennis Deer, expressing our profound gratitude for his years of service and dedication to the residents of Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Dennis Deer as an expression of our deepest sympathy and to honor his memory and contributions to Cook County.