

www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-council-olympicsjul01,0,2660880.story

chicagotribune.com

Chicago aldermen take on Daley's plan for 2016 Olympics

One proposal could set back city's efforts to get Games, expert says

By Dan Mihalopoulos and Kathy Bergen

Tribune reporters

July 1, 2009

At the first City Council meeting since Mayor Richard Daley increased the likelihood of Chicago being responsible for any losses from the 2016 Summer Olympics, aldermen countered Tuesday with measures to limit taxpayer liability and raise scrutiny of the city's bid.

Of three newly introduced measures, only one appears to have the potential to seriously damage the mayor's Olympic quest, and that proposal appeared to have only scant support in the council.

Ald. Manuel Flores (1st) introduced an ordinance to cap the city's liability for 2016 losses at \$500 million. Just 10 other aldermen in the 50-member council signed as co-sponsors. "I remain a supporter of the Games, but it has to be done in a thoughtful and transparent manner," Flores said. "What types of guarantees are we offering?"

Restrictions like what Flores proposed could severely harm Chicago's bid, several observers said. The International Olympic Committee will choose Oct. 2 between Chicago, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo.

"You don't want to put a land mine in the ... middle of the road," said A.D. Frazier, who was chief operating officer of the Atlanta Summer Games in 1996 and is a Chicago 2016 supporter.

Daley had long insisted city taxpayers would not be on the hook for any losses beyond the \$500 million guarantee the council had approved. But after meeting with IOC officials in Switzerland on June 17, he told the Tribune he would sign a host city contract putting the burden for all losses on Chicago.

Since his return from Switzerland, Daley has offered conflicting explanations on the issue. After Tuesday's council meeting he again said bid committee officials are working on an insurance plan that would protect taxpayers, which they would present to aldermen within two months.

Asked if his recent comments could undermine local support, he replied: "There is no credibility gap. ... This is not Mayor Daley's plan. ... We represent America."



Ald. Toni Preckwinkle, whose 4th Ward would include the Olympic Village, introduced a proposal to require bid committee chief Patrick Ryan to explain to aldermen many financial aspects of the 2016 effort.

And two Daley loyalists, Ald. Edward Burke (14th) and Ald. Patrick O'Connor (40th), called for the Civic Federation to analyze the Olympic bid. But federation President Laurence Msall said his government watchdog group might not have the expertise on this topic.

Tribune reporter Dan P. Blake contributed. dmihalopoulos@tribune.com

kbergen@tribune.com

Copyright © 2009, [Chicago Tribune](#)