



CLOUT STREET

CHICAGO TRIBUNE'S LOCAL POLITICAL COVERAGE

March 15, 2010

Video of Chicago City Council meetings now archived online

Posted by Hal Dardick at 12:35 p.m.

City residents who want to see for themselves what happened at a City Council meeting now can find video archives of the meetings on the Web, city Clerk Miguel del Valle announced today.

Del Valle's office went live this morning with this link http://www.chicityclerk.com/City_Council_Video_Archive.php, which includes council meetings back to October.

"During the next few months, you will see an improvement in the quality of the recordings," del Valle said. "This is just the beginning."

Joining del Valle in announcing his new effort were various government watchdog group leaders, who said making the videos accessible on line would improve transparency and accountability.

"They do a lot, they control a \$6 billion budget," said former Ald. Dick Simpson, now a government professor at University of Illinois at Chicago. "It's important as citizens that we hold them accountable, and we're able to see exactly what they do, how they do it and whether they are truly representing us."

Del Valle had authority to put the meeting archives on line because the council already had given his office the right to stream them live on the Web, as it has done for about two years.

But the council has not signed off on airing the meetings on cable TV, and Andy Shaw, executive director of the Better Government Association, said that step should be taken because 40 percent of Chicago residents don't use the Internet as their primary source of information.

"These meetings should be televised on the city's cable channels," he said. "Let's take the rest of the steps and do it right."