

## Did you know . . .

From the pages of *The Politics of Place: A History of Zoning in Chicago*, by Joseph Schwieterman and Dana Caspall

### **What did it take to build the City of Broad Shoulders? A lot of muscle, some fancy footwork, a few black eyes, and the “I Will” spirit these glimpses of Chicago's evolution reveal**

- In 1837—four years after it incorporated as a village—Chicago enacted a municipal code that prohibited any landowner or tenant from maintaining certain nuisances on their property, especially those affecting public health, such as dead animals, dung, and “putrid meat or fish entrails.” (p. 5)
- After the Great Fire of 1871, Chicago did not have the capacity to engage in large-scale planning; it even lacked a complete sewer system. (p. 3)
- The city pioneered tall-building regulation with a 130-foot height limit in 1893. (p. 80)
- Districting—or zoning—was a direct extension of the concept of police power, which included the right to protect the public through health and safety regulations. More broadly defined, it encompassed aesthetic concerns like community livability, cultural norms, and town character. (p. 14)
- During the early 1920s, the Chicago Urban League warned that negative stereotypes expressed by zoning advocates about African-Americans were laying the groundwork for racial segregation. (p. 29)
- Chicago—the birthplace of the skyscraper—conferred to New York a major advantage in tall-building construction when it adopted zoning in 1923, but Chicago later reversed course and the city develop one of the most admired skylines in the world. (p. 22)
- The advent of Planned Development in 1957 promoted greater flexibility and more innovative site plans, while the city gained mandatory review by the Department of Planning for all large-scale projects. (p. 45)
- A loophole allowed “four-plus-ones”—buildings with four floors of apartments or efficiencies elevated on pylons above a parking lot—to explode on the scene in the mid-to-late 1960s. Citizens came out in droves to protest the construction of these boxy edifices. (pp. 61–64)
- A high-rise boom along the north lakefront in the early 1970s triggered heated battles over neighborhood density—controversies setting into motion an era of extensive community involvement in zoning that continues to the present day. (pp. 58–61)
- During the late 1960s, deteriorating housing conditions, the decline of local retailing and manufacturing, and “white flight” devastated many neighborhoods. As the promise of urban renewal programs began to fade, protests against urban renewal began to occur. (p. 115)
- In the city's earliest days, Chicago's aldermen ruled their wards like fiefdoms. Times have changed, but the city is still infamous for its rough-and-tumble politics—a reputation attributable in no small way to aldermanic prerogative in zoning decisions. (Chapter 11)
- As the twentieth century drew to a close, the city's population rose for the first time in nearly 50 years, and new development proliferated. People who never thought about zoning before began complaining about the lack of restraint. (p. 119)

**This is the first book devoted exclusively to one city's zoning ordinance, making it an important contribution to the study of planning and urban policy.**