

# Chapter 50

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## No Games Chicago Is Erased From the Record

The phenomenon of erasure started just 24 hours after Decision Day.  
And it continued through the 2016 Olympics.

AS the Rio Games approached we saw a rash of re-examinations and re-writing of history

Howard Berkes has decades of experience covering the Games – reporting on six Olympics and two bids.

He credits the loss to Chicago’s lack of understanding on how to win IOC votes and a number of American gaffes by the U.S. Olympic Committee. “Finally, Chicago politicians defied their reputations for political acumen by failing to guarantee Olympic funding until a few weeks before the voting. This is the most basic element of Olympic bidding:

Don’t leave the IOC on the hook if you don’t raise enough money to pay all the Olympic bills. The failure to provide the guarantee earlier could have been viewed as classic American arrogance, as in “we like to do things our way...Chicago and President Obama were only able to muster 18 of 94 votes. That’s a pathetic 19 percent, proving the bidding for the 2016 Olympics was anything but politics as usual.”<sup>206</sup>

No mention of No Games Chicago.



The 2016 Summer Olympics were plagued with issues.

- “Inside the Problems That Plague Rio as Olympic Games Begin” – Brazil likely to lose more than \$15 billion and yet about 9 percent Brazil’s roughly 200 million people lived on less than \$3.10 per day in 2013, according to the World Bank. Zika outbreak prompts 150 health officials to move games. Police violence – 49 people killed in June 2016. 60,000 people killed by guns in Brazil. Body parts found on beach where volleyball to take place. Waterways of Rio contaminated with raw sewage.<sup>2</sup>
- “Here a list of all the issues surrounding the 2016 Rio Olympics” – IOC CEO saying foremost issue is keeping athletes and spectators safe from criminals AND police. Russia’s mammoth doping scandal involving 312 athletes across 28 Olympic events revealed after coverup resulting in banning of entire track and field team. Complaints that the Olympic Village was uninhabitable, with Australia sending 700 athletes to stay in hotels. Rio’s waters were also found to contain viruses up to 1.7 million times more hazardous than a beach in the U.S. Rio’s anti-doping lab was suspended.<sup>3</sup>

The 2016 Games ended up costing Brazil \$14 billion – just a 352% cost overrun from projections. These and other headlines were bouncing around the global media in late 2016.<sup>209</sup>

This is when it got REALLY maddening.

A progression of stories in the mainstream Chicago media opined that it was a GOOD THING that Chicago was NOT awarded the 2016 Olympics!



On July 23, 2012 the Chicago Tribune published an editorial “London Calling – Don’t Sweat Might Have Been.” 210

“Folks here still have mixed views on Mayor Richard Daley’s bid to host the 2016 summer games. The city’s early elimination remains a sore spot for some and a well of relief for others...

Proud Chicagoans who gathered at Daley Plaza for the live announcement quietly disperses, disappointed. For others, the rejection was welcome news.

Hosting the games can be a logistical and financial nightmare. A University of Oxford study projects the London games will be the most costly ever at around \$13.4 billion. *That's 101 percent over the city's original budget* [emphasis original]...

The grandiose Beijing production of 2008 will be a tough act for London to follow. The Chinese enlisted – we're not kidding – weather manipulation to ensure it didn't rain...

Just imagine: If Chicago had been chosen to host the 2016 games, the taxpayers could have been on the hook for a cloud separator.”

This is the same paper whose 2009 owner Sam Zell bankrolled the Chicago 2016 Committee for AT LEAST \$100,000, and likely MUCH more.

This was the start of a multi-year march of op-ed pieces, editorials, and reporting that all ask us to “imagine” a what-if scenario of Chicago hosting the Olympics.

### **That's EXACTLY what the organizers of No Games Chicago did.**

These articles also cite studies revealing mammoth cost overruns for delivering the Games as if it were news.

Again, all that was well known and well documented and frequently cited by No Games in our emails, press releases, on our website, and always emphasized when we were interviewed.

On August 13, 2012 Crain's Chicago Business print edition ran this editorial, “We're not carrying torch for 2016 games.”<sup>211</sup>

August 13, 2012 07:00 AM

## We're not carrying torch for 2016 games

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With the 2012 games finished, the Olympic torch now moves from London toward Rio de Janeiro. We confess: We're breathing a sigh of relief that the flame isn't headed to Chicago.

Of course, our Olympic dreams were crushed in 2009, when the International Olympic Committee summarily spurned Chicago's bid for the 2016 games. With that snub still fresh in mind, it was a little hard to watch the events in London and not envision how Chicago might have looked all decked out in its Olympics finery. Imagine the camera-ready optics of, say, a marathon run along Lake Shore Drive, rowing on the lake or archery in Grant Park. Hey, we're not made of stone. It would have made for a pretty picture.

That said, we're still counting our blessings that the city's grab for the Olympics brass ring fell short. A full accounting of London's outlays and receipts won't be known for some time, but the early word isn't encouraging. Londoners and visitors alike apparently stayed away from the city in droves. The *New York Times* reported in the early days of the two-week competition that the annual hordes of foreign tourists steered clear of London, while many natives, bowing to official warnings of overcrowding, skipped town as well.

The report went on to quote London merchants whose sales took a hit. So the immediate economic pop that the games are supposed to deliver never did materialize. Sound familiar? Anyone who walked the streets of the Loop during this year's NATO summit—dodging tumbleweeds, the occasional protester and forlorn cabbies eager for fares—can tell you that a city's turn hosting an international event on the global stage can be an underwhelming experience.

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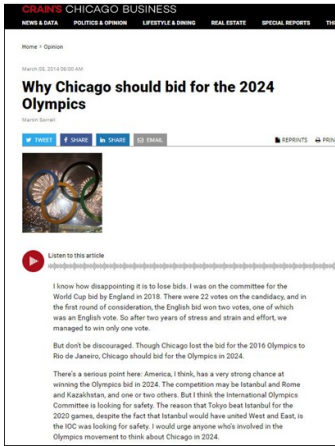
That said, we're still counting our blessings that the city's grab for the Olympics brass ring fell short. A full accounting of London's outlays and receipts won't be known for some time, but the early word isn't encouraging. Londoners and visitors alike apparently stayed away from the city in droves...

Chicago Olympics boosters never made a convincing case that we could afford the games, or really would benefit from them. Good luck, Rio.

"We confess: We're breathing a sigh of relief that the flame isn't heading to Chicago."

That's it? You're sighing with RELIEF now? Three years AFTER the Battle for the Bid was fought and won by the intrepid organizers and allies of No Games Chicago? There ought to be some sort of statute of limitations on precious after-the-fact pontificating.

How about voicing a giant HALILULAH for the people who did more than "sigh". Instead of "counting our blessings" that the Bid was lost – how about helping activists FUND a permanent space for progressive policy analysis and civic engagement that comes from such work.



On March 10, 2014, the Editors of Crain’s revisited the Bid. In an editorial “Presidential library belongs at U of C” the Chicago business publication opined on the imperative of locating the Obama Center in Chicago and that the state should chip in \$100 million. They conclude “Some will argue that Chicago and the state can’t afford to go for this project. Chicago can’t afford not to. Perceptions matter, and to be passed over for the Obama library would be an even bigger black eye that the one we suffered when the city was snubbed for the 2016 Olympics.”<sup>212</sup>

But wait, just twenty months before – Crain’s breathed a “sigh of relief” for NOT getting the Games. Now Chicago had a black eye for NOT being awarded the Olympics?? Which is it?

On the same page from the March 10, 2014 issue Crain’s ran the oddest op-ed piece by Martin Sorrell, the CEO of London-based WPP Group.<sup>213</sup> WPP is one of the world’s largest marketing and advertising companies with over 175,000 employees in 110 countries. At the time of this publication, WPP had annual revenues of over \$18 billion.<sup>214</sup>

“America, I think, has a very strong chance at winning the Olympics bid in 2024. The competition may be Istanbul and Rome and Kazakhstan, and one or two others. But I think the International Olympics Committee is looking for safety. The reason that Tokyo beat Istanbul for the 2020 games, despite the fact that Istanbul would have united West and East, is the IOC was looking for safety. I would urge anyone who’s involved in the Olympics movement to think about Chicago in 2024...

I would argue Beijing’s perception was changed by the Olympics, South Africa’s was changed by the World Cup and, despite the controversy about Brazil and Rio, there will be great tournaments and Olympics there in 2016. Furthermore, the Olympics in Sochi has been more successful than many people wanted it to be. Whatever the rights and wrongs of investing \$50 billion, it will be regarded as a successful event.

I would argue Chicago's virtues and strengths — its strong shoulders — are very relevant today and should be merchandized, if I can put it as crudely as that. And one of the ways of doing that is a bid for the 2024 Olympics.”

Martin is in the “perception” business, for sure. So he claims the world’s perception of Beijing was changed by their hosting of the 2008 Games (and now, the 2022 Games), right? And – despite “the rights and wrongs” of spending \$50 billion – did he have a straight face when he wrote that nonsense? – the Russian Sochi Games of 2018 were also a “successful event”?

But wait, could old fashioned greed be why Mr. Sorrell took to the pages of Crain’s? From the Wall Street Journal, 2012, “A deluge of advertising from the Summer Olympic Games and the U.S. presidential election is expected to maintain the momentum that propelled WPP PLC to a 43% increase in profit in 2011. Looking beyond this year, though, a dearth of global spectacles means a more subdued medium-term forecast. The world’s largest ad-agency holding company by sales, the parent of agencies including Young & Rubicam and Ogilvy & Mather, reported Thursday that net income rose to £840.1 million (\$1.34 billion) last year from £586 million a year earlier. Revenue increased 7.4% to £10.02 billion, surpassing £10 billion for the first time. Profit before interest, taxes, and exceptional items, which is tracked closely by analysts, rose 16% to £1.43 billion, exceeding market expectations of £1.4 billion.”<sup>215</sup>

In light of the present, in 2023 – when China has been accused of genocide and Russia is waging an unprovoked war in the Ukraine, targeting civilians with frequent reports of mass murder, torture, and rape – I wonder if Mr. Sorrell would like to withdraw his comments? Or – perhaps his firm WORKED with both countries to upgrade their global “perceptions”?

I felt Mr. Sorrell’s prominently placed comment (which ran his picture in the print edition) had to be answered. This reply appeared in the March 24, 2014 issue of Crain’s:

### **The Olympics? Seriously?**

Crain’s editorial staff opines that losing the 2016 Olympic bid was a “big black eye” (“Presidential library belongs at U of C,” March 10) and Sir Martin Sorrell, in a featured op-ed piece right next to the editorial, tells us

“Why Chicago should bid for the 2024 Olympics.” Are you trying to pave the way for a new bid? Mr. Sorrell’s advertising mega-company, WPP, enjoyed a 43 percent boost in profit from the 2012 Olympics, according to the Wall Street Journal. Will we ever learn that these mega-projects serve the richest insiders and corporate giants? Mr. Sorrell glides over this point when he says, “Whatever the rights and wrongs of investing \$50 billion...” when he talks about the Sochi Winter Games. The 2010 Vancouver games left the people there with a \$1.5 billion debt. The 2012 London games were \$10 billion over budget. No one asked the people of Russia about spending \$50 billion on the 2014 games. No one ever asks the people – if they did, we’d tell them to go take a leap. Which is what I’m telling Crain’s and any other corporate or political leader attempting to take Chicago down the Olympic mineshaft of financial disaster. No Games 2024.

Tom Tresser, Co-organizer, [NoGamesChicago.com](http://NoGamesChicago.com)

On July 15, 2015 Chicago Tribune columnist Phil Rosenthal published a piece “Imagine what hosting 2016

Olympics would've cost cash-strapped Chicago."<sup>216</sup> The print version of this column was MUCH more pointed: **"Chicago dodges its funeral" !!!**

He starts out with a bang:

"Sometimes the punch to the gut is what saves you, even if you don't realize it immediately. When you're doubled over, the bullet headed for your head whizzes harmlessly past.

So it was with Chicago's bid to host the 2016 Olympics. Remember that?

The bad news: We didn't get the Games.

The good news: We didn't get the Games.

Whatever Chicago felt about six years ago when International Olympic Committee voters quickly ousted it from finalist contention, ultimately selecting Rio de Janeiro, imagine if they had actually chosen this city...

Chicago hosting an Olympics would be like staging its own wake. Best-case scenario, it's a great party where everyone says wonderful things about it. But no matter what, when it's over, the city's buried."

***"Imagine if they had actually chosen this city"*** he wrote.

Phil, there WAS a group who DID imagine Chicago hosting the Olympics, and WE ORGANIZED to stop it.

Here's what I posted to the Chicago Tribune's comment section for that article:





Ah, Phil – where to begin. First, thanks for this great piece of analysis SIX YEARS TOO LATE. You have reached the conclusion that No Games Chicago reached in 2008. Our web site, , is still up and contains all the research and reporting that you and your colleagues at the Chicago Tribune and other local media outlets did NOT do or acknowledge.

In fact, aside from Ben Joravsky at the Chicago Reader, there was virtually NO critical reporting on the bid effort. Quite the opposite – Fred Eychaner, the owner of the so-called Progressive Talk Radio and Sam Zell, then the owner of your newspaper, were listed as Cash Contributors to the 2016 Committee at the “\$100,000+” level. CBS2 Chicago, Crain’s Business, NBC, NBC5-Telemundo, the Sun-Times Media Group, ABC 7 Chicago, Comcast Sports, FOX-TV Chicago, WPWR and WTTW all gave cash and donated services to the bid effort.

In Copenhagen, a leader of the winning Rio contingent thanked No Games Chicago for its work convincing Chicago citizens that the costs of the games would be ruinous, work the Chicago media SHOULD have doing.

**When the media cheers official plans and silences thoughtful critics, the public loses. This news blackout continues to this day when critics question top-down planning and unexamined scams such as The Central Area Plan, privatization, Tax Increment Financing and other officially sanctioned plans blessed by the Chicago Tribune and other local media platforms. This lack of media analysis of City Hall planning, coupled with our docile, Rubber Stamp City Council has left local taxpayers naked and vulnerable to equally bad deals.**

Phil, there was a rag tag group of volunteers who very much DID “imagine what 2016 Olympics would’ve cost.” We’re glad you are now one of them. Keep it up.

The Chicago Tribune weighed in again with an editorial from August 15, 2015. Amusingly headlined “If Chicago had won the Olympics...”<sup>217</sup> and suddenly finds the sober and skeptical tone needed to safeguard the public interest.



“Rio de Janeiro just marked one year until the 2016 Summer Olympic Games open there. Rio beat out some, um, excellent cities six years ago in the competition to host the Games.

We supported Chicago’s failed bid. But with each passing year it becomes clearer that Chicago dodged a bullet.

Rio’s bid in 2009 came with an estimated cost of \$14.4 billion, which was far more realistic than the \$4.8 billion bid made by Chicago. What would it really have cost Chicago? It sure would not have been \$4.8 billion.

London initially penciled in \$4 billion for the 2012 Games, but spent \$14 billion. Beijing spent an estimated \$40 billion for the summer 2008 Games. Russia spent an estimated \$50 billion for the Winter 2014 Games in Sochi.

Rio's preparations for 2016 have bordered on chaos. A subway extension may not be ready in time. Distance swimmers and boaters are scheduled to compete in waters that are contaminated with human waste. Olympic construction contractors are embroiled in an enormous corruption scandal. Brazil's booming economy, once a clear selling point for Rio's bid, is mired in what looks like a serious recession...The arguments in favor of hosting the Games — the immediate and long-term economic benefits, the international branding for the city, the national pride — don't stand up as well to scrutiny as they once did. Research by Andrew Zimbalist, an economist at Smith College, shows that Olympic tourists displace other tourists and anticipated increases in trade and investment don't materialize, while the branding benefits and feel-good effects for citizens are ephemeral.

"I think there's an underlying economic crisis," said Zimbalist, author of "Circus Maximus," a book on the Olympic financial sinkhole. No doubt Chicago would have a different vibe today, building a stadium and Olympic village and other venues, anticipating next summer, had it won the 2016 Games. But you have to wonder how much of a financial burden it would have been for a city that's already grappling with how to keep its schools and municipal government from financial collapse.

We'll watch the Rio Games with interest. And try not to gag when the swimmers hit the water.

A shame their sense of indignation was reserved – YEARS AFTER THE FACT – for their editorial page and not in the reporting on mega-projects and other scams being pushed on the people of Chicago.

I added this comment to website where the editorial was published (August 15, 2015, 8:27 am) as well as an email to Editors:

LOVED your Saturday, August 15 editorial, "If Chicago had won the Olympics." It was a nice companion piece to business columnist Phil Rosenthal's July 19 piece, "Chicago dodges its funeral - Imagine what 2016 Olympics would've cost."

Oh, Chicago Tribune - you can't re-write history. There WAS a group of citizens who knew everything you now cite in your wistful editorial. There was a group of neighbors - without budget, office or a phone - who DID imagine what the 2016 games would've cost Chicago.

The all-volunteer crew at No Games Chicago DID all the research YOU should've. All the points you cite in your editorial we called out over and over again in 2009. Take a look at . It's all still there. The review of past games, the academic research, the economic analysis, the exposing of Olympic corruption and over-runs, the massive debt incurred by host cities, the shredding of civil liberties, the corrosive assault on the environment, the loss of tourism, the boost to the Chicago Machine via kick-backs and corrupt insider deals...and much more.

The No Games crew tried repeatedly to get these facts into the public debate. That we managed to do so was more a testimony to our dogged determination rather than from the Chicago's media doing its job.

It was no accident that Chicago got booted in the first round of voting on October 2, 2009. We were in Copenhagen working to derail this train of BS (that you NOW deplore). You were there cheering it on.

But - more to the point - when the NEXT BS plan comes down from City Hall and the Big Money interests that drive policy here will you PLEASE take a tough look at those plans and give an ear to the voices of opposition who actually do the research you should do.

It's time to listen to the voices of opposition.

Tom Tresser  
Civic educator

I posted that editorial to my Facebook page and a got a number of positive comments. Here's one from Sophie Razo: "It takes an amazing effort to gather all the info as you and the crew did, and all the traveling, lobbying etc....not to mention all the knowledge needed to understand the real deal. That's why those who should have done all that work did not do it. Thanks, Mr. Tresser, for educating and defending us. You truly are a caring civil educator."

The Chicago Tribune was just getting started in the history revision business.

On July 17, 2016, the Chicago Tribune ran a front page story with two full interior pages.<sup>218</sup>

**FRONT PAGE - JULY 17, 2016  
• TWO FULL INTERIOR PAGES!**

BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Shon Davis would have welcomed an Olympic stadium in Washington Park, where he plays softball this summer.

## Failed bid for Olympics leaves a pricey legacy

By KATHY BERGEN AND STACY ST. CLAIR  
Chicago Tribune

Chicago's Washington Park was nearly empty on a recent Friday afternoon as Bronzeville resident Rosemary Jarrett power-walked her usual five laps around the perimeter of the graceful meadowland where a temporary Olympic stadium could have risen this summer.

The school crossing guard shook her head at the memory of the city's failed bid for the 2016 Summer Games. She had opposed it back then, she says, because she found everything to be alarmingly temporary — temporary jobs, temporary

7 years ago, Chicago's hopes to host the 2016 Games were dashed — leaving some happy, some sad and all with big bills to pay

venues, temporary peace in a city plagued by gunfire.

"I'm relieved we didn't get the Olympics," she said. "We have too much violence, too many problems. Why would we want the rest of the world to witness it?"

Come August, a down-trodden Chicago will watch the Summer Games taking place in Rio de Janeiro — an in-your-face reminder of what could have been had then-Mayor Richard M. Daley been able to pull off his high-octane push for the 2016 Olympics.

Daley and his lead salesman, insurance titan Pat-

**NO GAMES CHICAGO STRANGELY NOT MENTIONED!**

CHICAGO 2016 BID BOOK

Washington Park could have held this proposed stadium. The Olympics open Aug. 5 in Rio de Janeiro.

Turn to Games, Page 10

“Mounting Chicago's bid was an expensive but privately funded endeavor. Nearly \$76 million was raised from donors, who also kicked in \$16 million worth of goods and services. But it left a pricey legacy for taxpayers. The city is on the hook for about \$140 million in principal and interest on the purchase of property for an Olympic Village to house athletes, and it was saddled with costly, 10-year union contracts that were hammered out to ensure labor peace during the Games.

A report by the city's inspector general, in the waning days of Daley's administration, found the 34 union pacts “unduly hamstringing not only the current management of city government, but the next six years of management as well.” The deals were made in 2007, shortly before the country's economy cratered and the public realized the depth of the city's own financial woes, leaving it with little flexibility to reduce labor costs as it dealt with a massive deficit. The restrictive deal prompted Inspector

General Joseph Ferguson to recommend that the city pass an ordinance limiting labor deals to no more than four years, though the City Council so far has ignored that suggestion. Perhaps the bid's most lasting legacy will be even more expensive.

Eager to lock in property for an athletes' village, the Daley administration agreed in 2008 to pay Medline Industries nearly \$2 million per acre for the former Michael Reese Hospital site even as the economy and housing market were tanking. The city planned to resell the 49-acre Bronzeville parcel to a developer who would build apartments for Olympians, then convert the housing into a mixed-income residential community after the 2016 Summer Games.

The city had five years from the time the deal closed in 2009 to resell the land before any payments came due. Today, the tract west of the McCormick Place truck yards remains vacant and in city hands. A nearby parcel recently sold for \$300,000 per acre. "This inherited deal was a bad one for taxpayers," Peter Strazzabosco, the deputy commissioner of planning and development, said in a prepared statement. "Mayor Rahm Emanuel is taking steps to ensure taxpayer exposure is reduced and to bring the property back to productive use."

So far, a solution has been elusive and the meter is ticking. Unless the city can pay off the loan in advance, it ultimately will pay nearly \$50 million in interest on a \$91 million purchase. The financially strapped city used short-term borrowing to cover the deferred interest payments from the first five years of the deal, then used long-term bond proceeds to repay that borrowing.

"This is analogous to using credit cards to pay off a credit card," said bond expert Brian Battle, director at Performance Trust Capital Partners."

No Games was not approached for this piece is not mentioned or quoted. The reporters DID talk to people who had supported the Bid, including the former spokesperson for

the Chicago 2016 Committee. They even went to Lawrence Msall, still president of the Civic Federation, who had issued the ludicrous cover review for the Bid!

Worse - the article still went on to seek out and quote a major backer of the Bid, Chicago Community Trust CEO Terry Mazany (held that position from 2004-2011), who went on to become the Interim CEO of the Chicago Public Schools in 2010 under Mayor Daley<sup>219</sup>. Why his opinion shows up in this piece is baffling. I can barely bring myself to read these words again, seven years after they were first published:

"Yet a number of civic leaders still feel the risks involved in hosting the Games would have been worth it. The preparations and operation of the Games would have created jobs, while the international attention focused on the city would have made it a more prized destination for business investors and tourists, they say.

Terry Mazany, president and CEO of the Chicago Community Trust, says the Games would have pumped money into poor neighborhoods. "We would've had a more coherent plan of infrastructure investment ... all of which concurrently creates jobs and opportunities," he said. "Those jobs would've stopped hundreds of bullets. The reality in our neighborhoods would be completely different."

There is ZERO evidence for Mazany's outrageous assertions. The diversion of billions and billions of public dollars that hosting an Olympics WOULD HAVE claimed from operating the city and providing essential services would have hurt communities of color the MOST.

The article even includes claptrap from one of the Bid's highly paid flacks:

"John Murray, chief bid officer for the 2016 effort, said the bid energized and unified the city in a way that held huge promise. "Despite the problems with the economy and certainly the many issues facing the city, I'm a believer that that positive energy would have allowed us to not only overcome some of the issues we're facing today but would present new opportunities for us," Murray said.



Because Chicago's bid relied heavily on private funding and did not involve massive infrastructure projects, the city would have sidestepped some of the runaway cost issues faced by other host cities, said Murray, who is currently president of Arena Partners, a sponsorship and event company.

"The tide would have raised all boats and we would have seen, hopefully, less suffering in some of the communities from an economic perspective as more jobs were created and perhaps more positivity and unity in how we got things done," he said."

OF COURSE Murray is going to assert such nonsense. He was paid handsomely to do so in 2009 and how he runs a sponsorship and events business!

We called ALL this out multiple times across the entire Battle for the Bid in 2009.

Here is the email I sent to Kathy Bergen and Stacy St. Clair on July 19, 2016:

We read with great interest your front-page story on the legacy of the 2016 Olympic bid.

You missed something

No Games Chicago was the group that led the fight against the bid for over one year. We organized two large public protest rallies (April and September of 2009), attended over 75 public meetings all over city, maintained a solid website, and sent a delegation to the IOC's international HQ in Lausanne, Switzerland in June and again to Copenhagen just before the final vote in October.

When we went to the IOC's HQ in June we delivered to the IOC 100 copies of the "Book of Evidence" - 160 pages of reprints from local papers over the prior two years documenting how big a mistake it would be to award the games to Chicago. You can download your own copy here: [https://nogames.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/book\\_of\\_evidence.pdf](https://nogames.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/book_of_evidence.pdf).

We emailed all the members of the IOC short messages expanding on the material in the "Book of Evidence" for 70 days leading up to the October 2 vote

We know who opened those emails. We know that we were listened to and that we had an impact on the final vote.

Years later we coached the folks at No Boston Olympics - in fact they borrowed our graphic look (designed by Bob Quellos).



Because of their work Boston dumped their own bid. Because of that the citizens of Hamburg nixed their proposed bid. Some people say that NOT getting the games was a major factor in Mayor Daley retiring. SO - you could say that a small group of hard-working citizen volunteers with no budget and no office did the impossible. We defeated one of the most powerful organizations on the planet three times and successfully opposed the most powerful man in Chicago.

Now - all this is the past - but what drives some of us to distraction is that Chicago continues to go after BS plans and scams with little push back from the media. We fought City Hall and won and that story deserves to be told by somebody - as a caution against blindly accepting the nonsense that passes for city planning here and as an inspiration to other organizers and defenders of the common good.

Don't forget the owner of the Chicago Tribune at the time, Sam Zell, was listed as a cash contributor to the 2016 Committee for at LEAST \$100,000. Other media giving money and in-kind gifts were: Fred Eyechaner (owner of so-called Progressive Radio), CBS Chicago, Crain's Chicago Business, NBC. NBC 5 Telemundo Chicago, Sun Times Media Group, NBC 5 Chicago, ABC 7 Chicago, CBS 2 Chicago, Chicago Magazine, Fox TV Chicago, South Town Star, USA Today, WPWR and WTTW.

Will you - now that you have re-opened the can of Olympic worms - set the record straight?

On August 1, 2016 the City Journal published an article "Chicago's Olympic Escape."<sup>220</sup> The subheading was "The city should be grateful that it didn't get the 2016 summer games."



Steven Malanga, the senior editor of the City Journal at the time, wrote:

"Chicago's failed bid has left a legacy of bad deals, Chicago Tribune story. Looking to ensure labor peace for the 2016 games, the city negotiated

10-year contracts with 34 municipal unions at rich prices that have contributed to Chicago's fiscal decline. The city also paid \$2 million an acre for an empty site that would house the Olympic village—and it still owns the land. Undeveloped plots nearby go for a mere \$300,000 an acre. Total cost to the city unless it can unload the site soon: \$140 million. If the bid alone led to such ill-considered deals, imagine how badly Chicago might have mismanaged the vast building and planning for the games themselves.

It's also questionable whether the games would have been the public relations coup that Chicago officials anticipated. Crime is soaring in Chicago, up nearly 70 percent through the first five months of the year. Violent crime rates on the South Side of Chicago are on par with those in some of the world's most dangerous countries—including Brazil. This is the image that Chicago would have "marketed" to the rest of the world this summer.

Former mayor Daley originally opposed the Olympic bid, but when his popularity plunged, he saw winning the games as a way to revive his political career. This is what the Olympics have become: a way for politicians to distract citizens with the promise of circuses that cost a lot of bread. Chicago's Olympic defeat was a blessing.

"Chicago's Olympic defeat was a blessing." Wow. Here is what I posted on their website:

Steven, there was a group of volunteers who saw all this eight years ago. The tireless campaigners of No Games Chicago ([www.nogameschicago.com](http://www.nogameschicago.com)). We had no budget and no office and yet we did the research and the outreach that should've been done by our elected officials, civic think tanks and environmental protection organizations. NO ONE wanted to oppose Mayor Daley. Our story has never been told and now you join the growing ranks of journalists who have now reached the same conclusion we reached in 2008 when we started organizing. Please correct the record and do a little homework on No Games Chicago. It's important because

the people who run Chicago keep cramming BS plans like the Olympic Bid down our throats. It's critical to remind people that you need to do your homework, speak up and fight back against these ill-conceived plans that serve no one but the same group of insiders that have profited from running Chicago for decades.



On August 2, 2016 the Chicago Tribune ran this story by David Hough, “In retrospect, losing the 2016 Olympics to Rio a big victory for Chicago.”

A “big victory”?! Is this the same newspaper that sent Phil Hersh to cover the Games in Lusanne, Switzerland and who was so openly hostile to us there and tried to get us ejected from the Palace Hotel?

It’s like we are in an alternative universe when we read Haugh’s words:

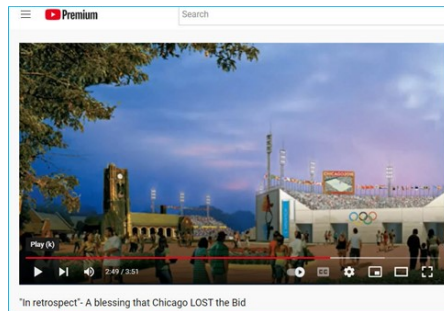
“One of the most demonstrative reactions to defeat I ever witnessed in Chicago occurred when we learned the city lost its bid to host the 2016 Olympics.

It was Oct. 2, 2009, and thousands of us gathered at Daley Plaza to await the big announcement from the International Olympic Committee’s vote in Copenhagen. Satellite trucks from 15 news organizations parked on Clark Street. October optimism — the rarest of things in Chicago — reigned. Anticipation filled the autumn air. One mother pulled her son out of elementary school to experience what she expected to be historic event. And it was.

It was the day the IOC saved Chicago from itself...Having originally supported the idea of the 2016 Olympics, this is what I wrote after walking back to Tribune Tower with a sense of dismay: “You have every right to be mad, Chicago. Something smells rotten in Denmark. ... This was the most frustrating defeat in Chicago’s recent sports history.”

Fast forward to now, days before Friday's opening ceremony in Rio de Janeiro, and that "most frustrating defeat," looks more like it was a fortuitous victory for Chicago. In retrospect, those groans in the plaza should have been cheers and any rancor toward the corrupt IOC replaced by relief. In texts documenting the city's first decade of the new millennium, you can find the IOC vote indexed under Blessings In Disguise...

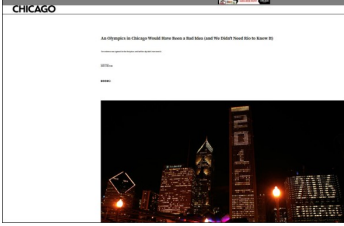
It would be fun for the city to throw a party back at Daley Plaza on Friday night during the opening ceremony to celebrate somebody else as host of the Games we once wanted. But Chicago has more important things to spend its money on than the Olympics, something easier to see seven years later."



You can watch a four minute video that accompanied the online version of this article at <http://www.tinyurl.com/In-Retrospect>. A number of people who use public spaces speak with conviction on what would've been lost had the Games come to town.

Everyone, it seems, is now a member of No Games Chicago! They just did not and do not know it.

On August 4, 2016 Chicago Magazine weighed in with an online article "An Olympics in Chicago Would Have Been a Bad Idea (and We Didn't Need Rio to Know It)" by Whet Moser.<sup>221</sup>

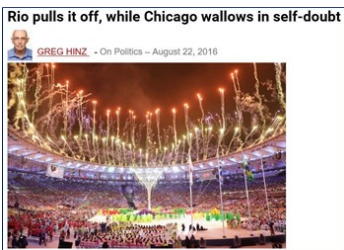


“The consensus about the Olympics seems to be that if it’s done well, the benefits are comparable to doing similar, unrelated public investments with the added difficulty of shoehorning the Games’ unique demands

into broad-based infrastructure plans that serve the city for more than a couple weeks. (The absolute best-case scenario is that you actually make money, but the circumstances that led to Los Angeles’s substantial profits were specific and unlikely.) The more typical scenario is that you do the above while incurring debt. The worst-case scenario is... well, we may be about to witness it, though for Rio’s sake it hopefully won’t be that much worse than usual. That consensus, though, was known before the problems in Rio began to mount; it was known when Chicago was bidding for the Olympics in the first place, which is why there was a robust movement against it. Just a month before the selection, with just 47 percent in favor of hosting the games versus 45 percent against, in no small part because Mayor Daley decided to put the city on the hook for potential losses at the very end of the years-long process. Rio isn’t the cautionary tale; it’s that the cautionary tales were known, and ignored by so many.”

Whet, where were you DURING the Battle for the Bid. Nowhere, that’s where.

Apparently, the urge to pontificate on the Olympics years after the Bid was like some civic virus – reporters, editorial boards, and columnists could not resist the urge.



On August 22, 2016 political writer Greg Hinz of Crain’s Chicago Business, weighed in with a piece called “Rio pulls it off, while Chicago wallows in self-doubt.”<sup>222</sup>

“The bean counters and professional boo-birds won’t like what I’m about to write. Telling Chicago to think small can become an all-consuming passion sometimes.

But as the last of the athletes trek home from Rio de Janeiro, a swath of sometimes mixed but mostly positive headlines in their wake—"Proud and Relieved, Rio Passes the Torch," the Wall Street Journal put it—I can't help but think about what could have been with Chicago 2016.

If Rio, with all of its problems, could produce a respectable games—and man, their problems make Chicago's look tiny—what would Chicago have produced? Not only a spectacle for the world but, more important, for the homefront... Chicago clearly already has huge debts, mostly for pensions. And the Olympics could have added to them.

But the games also could have opened new doors and possibilities. Ultimately, the only way for the city to escape its pension woes is to grow its way out of trouble with new business and new tax revenues. The 2016 Olympics were the kind of big idea that offered that possibility. If there's one thing I suspect most Chicagoans agree on it's that we need change, that the course we're on now may be falling short. The Olympics offered that possibility. Like people, cities get stuck in their comfort zones. They need a challenge.

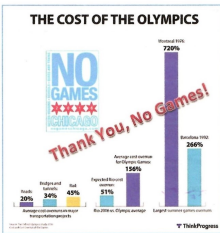
The Olympics could have been ours. [Mayor Emanuel] Deal with the budget and street crime, please. And schools. They matter to us all. But sometimes having a big idea to motivate you helps move things along. Daniel Burnham realized that more than a century ago with his famous line, "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood." No, they don't. Congrats to the folks in Rio. And Chicago? Time to wake up."

"Professional boo-boo birds? Could he mean No Games Chicago? Nah, you have to be paid to be a "professional," right? Here is my response posted to Crain's that day:

I wish we had a column in a major Chicago media outlet to spew this nonsense and magical thinking. Will anyone around here give No Games Chicago some credit for NOT being seduced by the IOC Kool-Aid or



threatened by Mayor Daley and his highly overpaid 2016 Committee? We also were in Copenhagen in the days leading up to the October 2, 2009 vote where Chicago was eliminated on the first round of voting. We had just delivered 100 packets of updates to the IOC - supplementing the 160 page "Book of Evidence" we had delivered to them in Lausanne, Switzerland in June (Get one for yourself at - 159 pages).



The Chicago Tribune and Sun-Times - media outlets which both contributed to the 2016 bid effort - now recant and say it was a great thing to have NOT produced the 2016 games. Books have been written - such as "Circus Maximus: The Economic Gamble Behind Hosting the Olympics and the World Cup" by Andrew

Zimbalist [ ], and the recent study from Oxford University "Olympic Proportions: Cost and Cost Overrun at the Olympics 1960-2012" [ ] - have well documented AGAIN what we said in 2009. Hosting a modern games is a city-killer. So - yes - Rio pulled off its games and, as So - yes - Rio pulled off its games and, as far as we know, no one was killed. But the destruction that made the games and the debt that games bequeaths the people of Brazil will soon be tabulated.

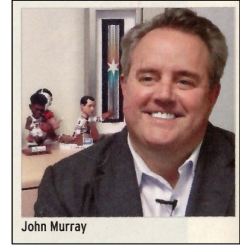
We're tired of the Mayor and his developer friends and allies at the corporate media like Greg and the editors of Crain's pushing "big plans" with astronomical price tags on us - plans that enrich the same set of insiders over and over again. We have a BETTER idea and you can read about it "Chicago is Not Broke. Funding the City We Deserve".

We dare Crain's to read it and report on it."

I will conclude this review of media disappointment with this charming piece from Crain's Chicago Business from October 18, 2014 entitled "Life is good, even after that Olympic loss" by columnist Shia Kapos.<sup>223</sup>

This slice of "where are they now" featured John Murray, the chief bid officer for Chicago 2016.

"On Oct. 2, 2014, exactly five years after Chicago lost its shot to host the 2016 Olympic Games, the city won the competition to host the 2015 NFL draft. John Murray, chief bid officer of Chicago's Olympics in 2009, couldn't help but notice the coincidence. It was bittersweet, but it proved out what we said—that there's a strong legacy that came out of the Olympics," he says in an interview in the Loop office of the Chicago Sports Commission, which he co-founded in 2011 and now is leaving to start his own business...



Mr. Murray, 46, calls the loss "the biggest disappointment" of his career. Looking back, he says, "One thing I would have done differently is to prepare the media and the public for the possibility that we might not make it. We didn't want to dwell on the negative, but we should have done a better job of explaining how the process works." For a year afterward, he says, not a single day went by without someone asking about it. "I had to relive it 365 times," he says.

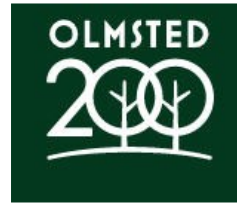
After the loss, he returned to the world of consulting, this time at Accenture in Chicago. He also helped start the sports commission. Choose Chicago CEO Don Welsh credits Mr. Murray with bringing the Big Ten basketball tournament, NCAA Frozen Four (hockey) and NFL draft to Chicago."

Don't feel too bad for him. If you remember, we learned that Mr. Murray earned a staggering \$364,000 annual salary for his labors at Chicago 2016. And – he was amply rewarded AFTER the Bid by landing a sweet contract with the city to produce something called "Chi-Town Rising" for New Year's Eve 2015.<sup>224</sup>

All of the above is a critical review of coverage from the mainstream media in Chicago and elsewhere.

It would need a separate book to deal with all the jargon-heavy SCHOLARLY writing about the IOC, the Olympics, and specifically – the Chicago effort to get the Games. Many articles written by professors and scholars from around the world say the most outrageous and unfounded things and make completely unsupported statements in their papers. **Check out this book's website for a special section on this nonsense.**

**2022 Update:** This year a major series of conferences and exhibits lifted up the 200th anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed Washington Park. “On June 17-18, NAOP will be in Chicago to #CelebrateOlmsted! If you plan to join us for the festivities, this blog will provide you with everything you need to know, including events and other opportunities to mark the bicentennial year of Frederick Law Olmsted.” I emailed Anne Neal Petri, the President of the National Association for Olmsted Parks<sup>225</sup> and called her to introduce the No Games Chicago campaign. I told her we had pretty much saved Washington Park from being destroyed so could she find some time on their agenda? No interest.



Why am I making such a big deal of this shoddy media coverage and being shut out by civic organizations?

Whose job is it, exactly, to call out troubling, suspect, and highly risky public projects that will consume billions of public dollars, tie up thousands of local public and private sector workers for years – preventing them from attending to OTHER pressing matters, and which will change the city so profoundly? If we can't rely on the local media to watch our collective public backs – then WHO can we rely on?

It used to be the independent media. But that is clearly no longer the case.

What is the purpose of having civic organizations like the Metropolitan Planning Council, the Chicago Community Trust, and enormous undertakings like the Burnham Centennial and Olmsted 200 if they are all silent co-conspirators to projects that will destroy Chicago's civics and waster billions of public dollars?

Who will critically interrogate the NEXT Olympic sized plan cooked up by Skidmore, Owens and Merrill or the Metropolitan Planning Commission or Pat Ryan or some other clouted billionaire?

How will organizers who want to STOP those projects proceed if they don't know how we stopped THIS one?