



City of Chicago



R2016-361

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	5/18/2016
Sponsor(s):	Burke (14)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Commemoration of 156th anniversary of nomination of Abraham Lincoln as Republican presidential candidate
Committee(s) Assignment:	

WHEREAS, May 16-18, 2016, officially marks the 156th Anniversary of one of the most historically important events in the American experience, namely, the nomination of Abraham Lincoln as the Republican candidate for president inside the Chicago "Wigwam;" and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of this milestone by Alderman Edward M. Burke; and

WHEREAS, In the years 1856-1860 the sectional crisis over the issue of slavery intensified; and

WHEREAS, The fledgling Republican Party, representing a coalition of abolitionists, Free Soilers, former members of the defunct Whig Party and Northern mercantile and industrial interests desired to hold its second national nominating convention in a Midwestern location; and

WHEREAS, The Republican Party selected the City of Chicago, an emerging "crossroads of commerce" driven by the rapid expansion of twelve east-west railroad trunk lines, as its host city; and

WHEREAS, With a growing population of 112,000, the city lacked an adequate convention hall to accommodate state delegations, out-of-town newspaper reporters and scores of dignitaries and public officials; and

WHEREAS, In response the Chicago Republican Club collected \$7,000 in private subscriptions, to erect a temporary three-sided wood-planked structure they named the "Wigwam;" and

WHEREAS, The hastily-constructed "Wigwam" stood just south of the Chicago River at the present site of Lake Street and Wacker Drive on land owned by the Garrett Bible Institute; and

WHEREAS, An estimated crowd of 30,000 people descended upon Chicago in the ~~second~~^{third} week of May 1860 to participate in or to observe the convention proceedings; and

WHEREAS, The Republican Party platform committee drafted seventeen statements of principle calling for the preservation of the Union and freedom of immigration while opposing the expansion of slavery, the Fugitive Slave Law; and

WHEREAS, Thirteen declared and undeclared candidates, including Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, vied for the party's nomination; and

WHEREAS, Senator William H. Seward of New York, the acknowledged front-runner for the nomination, faced a strong challenge from four other main contenders, including Ohio Governor Salmon P. Chase, Pennsylvania Senator Simon Cameron, Abraham Lincoln, and Missouri Congressman Edward Bates; and

WHEREAS, Senator Seward, Governor Chase and Senator Cameron each confronted strong internal opposition among various factions and special interests of the Republican Party; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Illinois and Indiana delegations, with long-time Abraham Lincoln supporters Ward Hill Lamon, David Davis and Leonard Swett, recognized an opportunity to secure the nomination of Lincoln, a westerner favorably viewed by political moderates; and

WHEREAS, The Lincoln team acted swiftly and resourcefully to shore-up support for their candidate through political subterfuge and artful negotiation; and

WHEREAS, On the evening of May 17th, Davis and Swett negotiated key cabinet appointments for Senator Cameron and Governor Chase in return for an agreement to release their delegates to Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, To counter the remaining threat to Abraham Lincoln's nomination posed by the Seward delegation, Ward Hill Lamon authorized the printing of counterfeit admission tickets to the gallery and randomly distributed them to Lincoln loyalists who "packed" the hall; and


WHEREAS, By the time the Seward delegation arrived at the Wigwam from their hotels they were denied admission after discovering their places had been taken; and

WHEREAS, A vanguard of pandemonium swept over the hall as the Lincoln supporters stamped their feet and loudly cheered on the favorite son of Illinois to a stampede victory on the third ballot with 349 delegate votes; and

WHEREAS, If not for the behind-the-scenes maneuvering of Ward Hill Lamon, David Davis, Leonard Swett and hundreds of Chicago citizens, it is quite probable that Abraham Lincoln would have lost the nomination and the future course of American history would have forever altered; and now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council assembled this eighteenth day of May, 2016, do hereby commemorate this historic and prominent anniversary and pay homage to the courage, the memory and sacrifice of our beloved sixteenth President, Abraham Lincoln, a proud son of Illinois; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to the Chicago History Museum and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. M. Burke', written over a horizontal line.

Alderman Edward M. Burke
Alderman, 14th Ward