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### **ALDERMAN RAISES RED FLAG ON NEW PARKING METER PRACTICES**

“LAZ Parking is cheating our citizens, plain and simple,” says 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Leslie A. Hairston about the private entity currently responsible for operating Chicago’s 36,000 on-street parking meters. Hairston is demanding the city council look into LAZ’s deceptive practices and failure to comply with its contract. She also wants the company to provide restitution for money obtained through deception.

Hairston says she personally encountered parking meters where the minutes for a certain monetary amount fell short of what was advertised. Her complaint to the city resulted in LAZ representatives meeting with her in her South Shore office. “They admitted to a ‘glitch’ in their system,” she reports, “which just happened to put more revenue in their pockets, in addition to what they received from raising the parking fees.”

LAZ’s representatives also acknowledged they had not secured the participation of minority and women businesses as required. “Companies were recommended, but LAZ didn’t even bother to contact them,” says Hairston.

Last December, the city council approved Mayor Richard Daley’s plan to lease the meters for 75 years to a consortium put together by the investment banking firm Morgan Stanley and giving LAZ responsibility for seven years. Hairston was among five aldermen who voted no, judging it “a bad deal for the city,” involving virtually no transparency or time for assessment.

“I shouldn’t have had to get my questions answered after the fact, from LAZ,” says Hairston. “We can’t keep selling off the city’s assets for questionable public benefit, to entities we haven’t had a chance to evaluate, with only 72 hours for review. We have to put the brakes on, when we see problems. Otherwise, what’s the incentive for those who do business with the city to deal with our money and citizens responsibly?”