

COMPROMISE PROPOSED TO SAVE COVENTRYARD

At a special meeting of the Cleveland Heights Board of Zoning Appeals held on May 24, representatives of the City and of developer Lewis A. Zipkin met to bitterly contest a demolition order placed on Coventryard by City Building Commissioner Jack Travis. But after a closed-door session held while the BZA was in recess, Assistant City Manager Irv Silbert told the Board that these two sides were of the opinion that they could reach agreement on a compromise on or before the next BZA meeting of June 21. All parties, therefore, requested a continuance. Thus, the post-fire history of Coventryard took a sudden and dramatic turn--one which may lead to a final solution of the demolish-vs.-re-build controversy by October 1, 1978.

An earlier BZA meeting on the subject occurred on May 17, but was adjourned and continued at 1:45 a.m. due to the lateness of the hour. Before adjournment, Mr. Zipkin had outlined the present situation from his perspective, saying that an insurance draft had only been received ten days earlier and that a reconstruction feasibility study would soon be underway. He told the BZA that it is difficult to plan reconstruction given the pending City order to demolish.

Mr. Zipkin claimed that Coventryard had re-vitalized Coventry and had earned national and international recognition. "I believe there is no basis for the demolition of the building," he said, further claiming that "the structure of the building...is sound." Citing the loss of commercial trade and real estate taxes caused by the fire, he asked for at least an opportunity to complete a feasibility study.

Milton Rudick, a Youngstown engineer and contractor working for an adjustment company hired by Mr. Zipkin, testified that the building was salvageable. He claimed that its main structure is intact, and that fully one-third of the building's value is still there in terms of the total cost of construction. He estimated salvage value at \$443,715 and replacement value at \$1,348,503.

This testimony of the preceeding week was on everyone's mind when the BZA met on May 24. Though many of the details of a proposed compromise remain unsettled, a brief description was given to the BZA. Mr. Zipkin would post a bond to cover the cost of demolition should he fail to obtain a building permit by October 1, 1978. This would amount to a consent by Mr. Zipkin not to contest the demolition order through the courts and a consent by the City to allow more time for feasibility studies and specific development proposals.

Delay is not without risks, as Building Commissioner Jack Travis made clear in a highly emotional statement to the BZA. Citing the health and safety threats involved, he asked that the record reflect that he is not personally liable to suit under Ohio law as a result of further extensions of time. CNI representatives have seen the photos taken by Mr. Travis of rotten food and debris inside Coventryard which have caused City officials to fear the possible consequences--e.g. rats, insects, and more fire. On the other hand, attorney Adrian Fink, speaking for Mr. Zipkin, claimed that the compromise would provide for removal of debris within thirty days and cooperation between Zipkin-hired exterminators and the City.

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 The next meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will take place on Tuesday, June 13, 1978, at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Society on Lancashire Road, across from the Musicians Tower.

Coventryard...continued

Thus, the building will be left standing at least until the BZA meets on June 21. BZA Chair Fred Toguchi bitterly criticized the boarding-up job. He and other BZA members seemed to expect that the City will continue to pressure Mr. Zipkin for results and not just promises. All parties apparently agree that a relatively quick resolution of issues is in everyone's interest. The next step will be taken at that June 21st meeting of the BZA where, possibly, a full compromise will be announced.

- Alan Rapoport

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PEP Denied Permission For Permit

In the April issue of Coventry Village News, I wrote a short article about a proposed group home for 2541 Kenilworth Road. The Planning Commission heard the proposal of the Positive Education Program (PEP) at the April 12th meeting. Numerous residents also spoke for and against the proposal and correspondence on the subject was submitted for consideration of the Commission members. Not having time that evening to digest all the facts and opinions, the decision was delayed until May 10th. At the meeting then, the decision was made not to grant the conditional use permit.

This decision was made with obvious distress on the part of the voting members. "The most difficult decision I have had to make while on this Commission," was the way one member put it and similar sentiments were voiced by all the others. All agreed that PEP was a much needed service and a quality program--but not at the corner of Kenilworth and Overlook. Some of the reasons given were: concentration of other group homes in the area, lack of outdoor space for the 8 to 10 teenage boys involved in the home, and neighborhood resistance to saturation of institutions in the area making it less desirable for single family residences and "normal" family life.

Dr. Rico Pallota and Mr. Fred West of the PEP agency are to be commended for their thorough presentation and cooperation with all involved. The neighbors are to be commended for their willingness to become involved and carry through on an issue directly affecting their life-space, and kudos to the Commission for an agonizingly difficult decision--that PEP look elsewhere.

- Barbara Orban

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We'll Be Calling Soon

The Heights Community Congress will be calling people soon to ask for their financial support. Several CNI members intend to make the Coventry calls, so don't be surprised if you get one.

Please remember that HCC needs your help if it is to remain a viable positive force in Cleveland Heights. CNI urges you to give generously.

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.....And Speaking of Money.....

The checks are still trickling in to CNI. Thanks to the help of many people, this newsletter can pay its way. We do appreciate this support (and the several nice personal notes) and we promise to continue our efforts to inform and entertain you.

If you haven't paid your dues yet, please do. The money is still needed!

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GOOD SAMARITANS ON COVENTRY

It was recently noted by CNI that vandals had smeared a swastika on the walls of Coventry Poultry (1825 Coventry) with red paint. Soon after, this emblem disappeared. CNI has discovered that the emblem was removed by Richard Sauto and Edward Barcik, two University Heights police officers who also operate National Surface Cleaning, an exterior maintenance firm.

The pair acted after reading about the incident in the Cleveland Jewish News. While on their way to do a job, they detoured and cleaned that offensive wall on Coventry. There was no charge.

CNI Vice-President F. David Gill addressed the following letter to the company:

"On behalf of our organization, I would like to express the gratitude of the entire Coventry community for your removal of the anti-Semitic writing from the wall of the Coventry Poultry Market. The continued presence of that contemptible inscription on a Jewish-owned business was an insult to the thousands of people of good will who live and work in our neighborhood.

We understand that your services were rendered at no charge to either the Market or the property owner, despite the obvious fact that you expended significant amounts of time, fuel, and materials on the project.

Prior to your spontaneous action, we had collected contributions totaling \$25.00 from area merchants and residents of diverse religious backgrounds, in order to rid our neighborhood of this obscenity. We would appreciate your giving us the opportunity of sharing in your charitable deed by accepting the enclosed check for the amount mentioned. If, in good conscience, you cannot personally accept this money, please pass it along to a charity of your choice.

Your kindness will be remembered in the Coventry community for a long time to come."

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Dobama, 1846 Coventry Road

"Marilyn's Music," directed and arranged by Mike LiBassi. An evening of songs and dances from musicals Marilyn Bianchi directed over the years at Dobama; a collage of love, laughter and life.

Dates:	Now through Sunday, June 11
Times:	Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays - 8:30 p.m.
	Sundays - 7:30 p.m.

BUILDING INSPECTORS COMB COVENTRY

Cleveland Heights building inspectors are wrapping up the most extensive health and safety inspection in the long history of the Coventry commercial district. Around the first of the year, City Hall initiated a program providing comprehensive inspection of all commercial buildings within Cleveland Heights. The fires which claimed Coventryard and Irv's Restaurant and Deli, along with the resulting public outcry for intensified inspections along the Coventry commercial strip, prompted City officials to make our area their first inspectional priority.

According to Jack Travis, City Building Commissioner and Chief Enforcement Officer of the Ohio Building Code within Cleveland Heights, inspections have been completed on the entire west side of Coventry Road, and are continuing on the east side. The inspections are being conducted by Travis himself, Building Inspector Ron Johnson, Plumbing Inspector Joe Mazzola, and Electrical Inspector Park Bigelow.

Mr. Travis has stressed that the inspectors have strong individual qualifications for this work. Mr. Johnson apprenticed as a carpenter for four years and has been an inspector for three years. Mr. Mazzola has 46 years experience as a plumbing contractor and State certification. Mr. Bigelow, who inspects electrical systems, apprenticed four years, spent 22 years in the trades, was a State Inspector for three years, and is certified by the State of Ohio. Mr. Travis has four years of apprentice training, 16 years in the trades, and three and one half years experience as a Chief Electrical Inspector for the State.

Commercial inspections are performed by all four inspectors. If residential units are located above commercial units, all are inspected.

On May 24th, Mr. Travis informed CNI that no building inspected to date was found to be free from violations. "The situation is worse than I had anticipated. There are electrical problems in almost every building, along with lots of plumbing and plastering deficiencies, and debris in basements," said Mr. Travis. He emphasized, however, that there is no cause for public alarm. He praised the majority of Coventry shopkeepers and property owners for their cooperation, saying that, in most cases, they are correcting defects even before they have received an official written notice of violation.

- F. David Gill and Alan Rapoport

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Library Board Votes to Build in Coventry, IF

Editor's Note: On May 15, 1978, the Board of Library Trustees of the Cleveland Heights/University Heights Public Library passed the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Library Trustees is desirous of relocating the Coventry Branch so as to upgrade the quality and quantity of library services available to the Coventry neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Library Trustees has explored various potentially suitable sites and locations in the Coventry area both for lease and purchase for relocation of the Coventry Branch including renting interior space in Coventry School; and

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WHEREAS, the Board of Library Trustees has evaluated all of the potential sites and has concluded that to build the Coventry Branch onto the School is the only feasible solution to relocation of the Coventry Branch at this time; therefore

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Board of Library Trustees be authorized to enter into such contracts and agreements with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education that have the effect of granting the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Library Trustees perpetual use, or other commitment, of the land directly adjacent to the north side of Coventry School including access off Euclid Heights Boulevard; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that none of the foregoing resolutions shall be considered adopted by the Board of Library Trustees until the 1.7 mill library levy placed on the ballot in the June, 1978 general election should be approved by the requisite majority of the qualified voters in Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District and the conditions precedent stated herein below are satisfied; and

1. The project architect shall certify in writing that the conditions of the property are such that a building of approximately 2,500 square feet can be built on the proposed land;

3. The attorney for the Board of Library Trustees approve all agreements and contracts pertinent to implementation of the foregoing resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that should the levy pass and the conditions precedent are met, that the Clerk-Treasurer be authorized to expend such funds from the Building and Repair Fund and to perform such acts as required to implement the foregoing.

"To do is to be":	Sartre
"To be is to do":	Descartes
"Do be do be do":	Sinatra

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THE FIFTH ANNUAL COVENTRY STREET FAIR

At its Wednesday, June 21 meeting, the Cleveland Heights Board of Zoning Appeals will consider the request of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. for a special permit to allow a community street fair to be held on Coventry Road on Saturday, July 29 from 6 to 10 p.m. and on Sunday, July 30 from 1 to 6 p.m. This matter will be subject to a public hearing before the Board. CNI organizers are optimistic about chances of getting City approval. A CNI committee of eight members has been meeting bi-weekly for almost two months now to assure that all plans are properly made.

The fair will be financed mainly by the issuance of street vendor permits. Basic costs will be incurred for police protection, advertising, and logistical support for musicians. Any funds which remain following the payment of these items will be held in a specially restricted CNI bank account, to be used in some manner designed to enhance and improve the appearance of the Coventry commercial strip.

Applications for street vendor permits are presently being taken by CNI and interested parties are advised to contact the following persons:

Elvie Zell (Crafts) - (321-1108)

David Budin (Music) - (H: 932-3741; W: 248-6455)

Alan Rapoport (Food) - (H: 932-1144; W: 696-0600)

More details about the Street Fair will be advertised when they are finalized. For now, CNI is holding back until the City grants the special permit.

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Rock Court Evictees Raise Community Planning Issue

Tenants evicted from six Rock Court flats have accused the Cleveland Heights Planning Department of complicity with Pick-N-Pay management to impose a "major shopping center" on the corner of Coventry and Euclid Heights Boulevard.

Eviction orders were served in the last month at 1836, 1838, and 1840 Rock Court, three two-story frame houses with an apartment on each floor, abutting the Pick-N-Pay parking lot. The landlord, the Siegler family, reportedly has taken out demolition permits on the buildings, because of City Housing Code violations so extensive that tear-down is cheaper than repair. The Siegler family is also the landlord of Coventry Pick-N-Pay.

Chain management of Pick-n-Pay has long wanted to improve the Coventry store by replacing it with a larger one and, concomitantly, increasing available parking. Representatives of the chain shared their thinking with a Coventry Neighbors meeting about five years ago, and their latest plans were discussed last year at a meeting with City staff, Coventry merchants and Coventry community leaders. Pick-N-Pay would like to drop the store if they cannot improve it, and would have moved to Severance if the 1976 Gold Circle expansion had gotten through Council.

Pick-N-Pay plans for Coventry have not changed much over time. They would clear everything except Metro Savings between Rock Court and Coventry south of the north boundary of Pick-N-Pay; this includes two apartments on Euclid Heights Blvd. across from the school, and a small commercial/residential building on Coventry.

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Rock Court (continued)

The new Pick-N-Pay store, to be built behind the present one, would include space for businesses displaced, and would have parking on the roof. The present store would come down and all cleared space would go for parking and walkways.

The evicted tenants assert a City Government role in their plight. They question the sudden onset of effective housing enforcement on buildings that have languished in the same condition for so long. They challenge the City Planning Department's role in developing Pick-N-Pay's plans; a handout asserts intentions "by Cleveland Heights Planning Department and Pick and Pay without community input." They are aggrieved that the general public was not invited to the 1977 meeting mentioned above. They protest the zoning designation of the land in question as "development" rather than commercial or residential, as a label that can draw more land investment dollars for speculation than for maintenance.

Spokesman Lee Batdorff, one of the affected tenants and a member of Coventry Neighbors, has covered the issue in a community newsletter, recently renamed "Express," which he edits; in a special-focus publication, "Preserve Our Community," published by a support organization of the same name and also edited by Lee Batdorff; and in a presentation at the May 9 Coventry Neighbors meeting.

Acting City Planning Director Howard Maier, at the same CNI meeting, denied any initiative from his Department in the evictions. He pointed out that the function of his Department is to draw up many contingency plans, few of which will ever materialize. He could not answer for housing enforcement or the zoning question.

The City Government has been under pressure from Coventry residents and merchants to improve parking, and from residents wanting Coventry Pick-N-Pay improved. City government involvement is inevitable because of zoning restrictions, if only in that even expanded parking might not meet code for an expanded Pick-N-Pay. The City cannot realistically argue with Pick-N-Pay managements' business decision that improvement implies expansion. If any principal wants to bring about these changes desired by the community and the City, and approaches the City for help, the Planning Department is remiss if it does not help put the possibilities on paper.

The Rock Court residents remain critical of the City for not protecting their legitimate interests in community preservation and a place to live. They are seeking delay in the courts to develop alternatives to demolition. At its May 9 meeting, Coventry Neighbors Inc. resolved disapproval of the "depopulation and impending demolition of the west side of Rock Court." Preserve Our Community meets every Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. at 1836 Rock Court.

- Dave Burwasser

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NOTICE: Special Election for CNI Treasurer in June.