*** COVENTRY VILLAGE NEWS ***

November 1978 Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors, Inc.

COVENTRYARD FACES COUNCIL HURDLE

In Act III, Scene I of our play, "The Death And Life Of Coventryard," City Manager Richard Robinson declined to seek permission from the Cleveland Heights City Council at its October 2 meeting to demolish the fire-damaged building. Then came a remarkably amicable discussion between developer Lewis Zipkin, his architect, and CNI during Scene II, followed by a strong CNI endorsement of the new Coventryard proposal at its October 9 meeting. This, in turn, was followed by Scene III--the October 10 meeting of the Cleveland Heights Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), at which Mr. Zipkin sought and won initial parking variances and conditional use permits for his project.

Theatre buffs will recall that on February 5, 1978, a fire destroyed Coventryard. (Act I). This was followed by condemnation by then City Building Commissioner Jack Travis on March 29 and a dramatic reprieve granted by the BZA on June 21. (Act II).

After the hurdle of the BZA was cleared, problems arose during Act III, Scene IV as the City's Architectural Board of Review (ABR) balked at the design. But on October 24, enough of these problems were deemed solved to prompt the ABR to say that Mr. Zipkin could proceed in the near future.

Enter Act IV. At present, the entire Coventryard renovation project depends on BZA permits and variances which the City Council has power to veto. Council has vetoed the recent commercial proposals for an ice cream parlor on Coventry, citing a lack of parking and need of a "comprehensive" City parking plan for the commercial strip. There is no known comprehensive plan, no new parking, and no lots to be built in the immediate future.

The eyes of Coventry and, indeed, of Greater Cleveland are now on the City Council of Cleveland Heights waiting to see how it will act on the question of Coventryard.

-- Alan Rapoport

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The next meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will take place on Tuesday, November 14, 1978 at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Society on Lancashire Road, across from the Musicians' Tower. THIS WILL BE THE ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING FOR CNI OFFICERS. Meetings are public and open, so please feel free to attend!

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CNI TO ELECT A TRUSTEE TO HCC

Besides the election of its own officers, the Coventry Neighbors, Inc. meeting of November 14 will select a Trustee to the Heights Community Congress (HCC). The HCC is a broadly-based coalition of civic, religious, neighborhood, government-related, school-related, business and civil rights organizations in Cleveland Heights, and for the past several years Coventry Neighbors, Inc. has served as HCC's "umbrella" organization in the Coventry School District (one of 10).

Activities of the HCC have included open housing, realty monitoring, recycling, a crime prevention task force, a tenants rights task force, the Heights Heritage Tour, the Community Improvement Awards and the Heights Child Care Association. The HCC budget for 1977-78 was $146,433.60.

A change in the structure of the HCC puts neighborhood organizations into a new role. Each of the 10 neighborhood groups is now to elect one Trustee to a Board consisting of 24 Trustees in all. Previously, all neighborhood organizations were represented on the HCC Board by one Trustee out of 14. Besides the obvious increase in the power of neighborhood organizations, this brings another fundamental change. For the first time, there will be Trustees representing a geographical portion of the city. Hitherto, all Trustees have represented interests that are city-wide (e.g. all civic organizations or all Protestant churches.)

This is an implicit recognition of an important fact. While many issues are city-wide and call for a uniform resolution, others are unique or particular in different neighborhoods, and solutions for all cannot be knocked out of the same cookie-cutter. It also recognizes that a conflict of interest between two sections of the city is just as worthy of airing and give-and-take resolution as similar conflicts between the HCC constituent groups that operate city-wide.

The official term of the Coventry Neighbors, Inc. HCC Trustee is to be three years. This is a formulation of the Congress which cannot be imposed on CNI against its wishes, as HCC rules permit replacement of a Trustee by the constituent organization at any time. The reason for three-year terms is a good one--it takes about a year for a Trustee to find out what's going on--but the established Coventry Neighbors, Inc. pattern is annual terms. This is obviously something we're going to have to work out.

The Coventry Trustee will bring CNI into a new kind of contact with the plans, goals and programs of the Heights Community Congress. It is a development worthy of our best attention.

--- Dave Burwasser

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SOHIO WANTS SELF-SERVICE STATION IN COVENTRY

The Standard Oil Company will go before the Cleveland Heights Board of Zoning Appeals on November to seek a conditional use permit to allow demolition of its full-service station at Coventry and Mayfield and construction there of a self-service gasoline station, cashiers kiosk, and canopy. CNI will discuss this at its November 14 meeting.

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CHILDREN'S FILM SERIES AT CEDAR-LEE

The Cleveland Cinema Guild announces a new series of films for children to be started at the Cedar-Lee Theatre. Showings will be mostly on Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. and all seats are $1.50. (Children may bring non-child friends.) Movies are as follows:

November 4 ------ Doctor Doolittle
November 11 ----- Journey Back To Oz
November 24-25 -- Raggedy Ann & Andy
December 2 ------ Brighty Of The Grand Canyon
December 9 ------ Alladin And His Magic Lamp

There is ample parking in the City Municipal Lot off Cedar just east of Lee Road. For more details, contact Pat Faller of the Guild at 241-2180.

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OPINION: COVENTRYARD NOW!

City Council has an opportunity which is very rare. It can give commercial development on Coventry a boost or it can give it a kick in the teeth. The test will be its vote on the parking variances and permits granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals to Coventryard.

Council's attitude toward parking in Coventry has consistently been years behind the times. When parking was tight, it cited the need for development and approved parking variances with little question. But recently, with 16 stores out of commission, 5 vacancies, and most every business on Coventry hurting from declining street traffic, Council overruled the Board of Zoning Appeals and denied a parking variance to a proposed ice cream parlor. Several Council members explained their votes by pointing to the shortage of parking in Coventry. In doing so, I feel they underestimated the serious need for commercial development at this point in time. In its present condition, Coventry does not have a parking problem.

The City's oft-heralded "comprehensive parking plan" for Coventry should not be considered a necessary pre-condition to commercial renovation projects. Not now, at least. Further delay in getting projects going will be costly.

The issue is larger than Coventry. If Council denies the variances in this case, it will be evincing an inability to make distinctions and recognize realities in Coventry. Its credibility in dealing with other commercial districts in this City and their problems will be suspect.

The time for granting variances and permits to Coventryard is now.

-- Alan Rapoport

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GLENMONT STREET ASSOCIATION FORMS

Congratulations to our friends on Glenmont Road, whose efforts have resulted in the formation of the Glenmont Street Association. The group's activities have already included a Block Party, meetings with police officers to deal with neighborhood concerns, and the publication of an impressive newsletter

Glenmont is a pleasant, healthy street, and a microcosm of Cleveland Heights' rich ethnic, philosophical, and economic diversity.

Coventry Neighbors, Inc. would welcome a representative of the Glenmont Street Association at our regular monthly meetings.

Other Coventry area residential streets interested in organization would be wise to emulate the folks on Glenmont.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

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CNI ENDORSES ISSUE 12

At its October membership meeting, CNI voted to support Cleveland Heights Ballot Issue 12. This measure would increase the city income tax by 1/2% in order to maintain city services at their present level.

If the voters of our city fail to approve this issue, we may face drastic reductions in police, fire, and sanitation services.

We believe that a mature and objective assessment of the facts underlying this issue leads one to the conclusion that we must vote for Issue 12.

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CNI TO ELECT NEW OFFICERS

Every year, Coventry Neighbors, Inc. must consider its origins, think of its future, and collectively resolve the crucial question of who will represent the organization for the next year. In accordance with long-standing tradition, this notice is being printed to remind everyone that the election of officers will be held at the November monthly meeting.

This meeting will undoubtedly be devoted to an extensive discussion of what CNI did this past year and what it will do next year. It will be an important meeting.

Candidates for office should live in the Coventry area and are generally expected to give a damn about the neighborhood. CNI will elect a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and two Trustees.

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Rumor Control.....Irv's Deli did not get a Community Improvement Award for burning down. And Irv Gulko has begun work on his new store. He hopes to open in the Spring.

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Goodbye, Mrs. Stein

On Monday night, October 30, over eighty people gathered for dinner at Tommy's. The occasion was sad enough, though everyone was in good spirits. Friends were there to say goodbye to Mrs. Stein, a sweet, elderly woman whose laundry at Hampshire and Coventry will be displaced by the new Irv's Deli.

Mrs. Stein did more in over two decades to keep Coventry clean than many a City administration. Of that we can be sure. We note with regret her passing from the Coventry scene. She enters a well-deserved retirement with the best wishes of all who know her for long life and good health.

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OPEN SEASON ON PEDESTRIANS CANCELLED - AT LAST!

Police Chief Martin G. Lentz informs us that he has assigned special patrol units the responsibility of ticketing motorists who threaten the safety of pedestrians in the crosswalks on Coventry.

The problem of drivers who fail to yield right-of-way to crosswalk pedestrians in the commercial district is an old one--one that has caused many frustrated pedestrians to assume the responsibility of enforcing the law on their own by "colliding" with the sides of autos as they whiz by. This technique has resulted in the arrest of at least one irate citizen within recent memory.

The issue of crosswalk safety came to a head on October 25, when two pedestrians were struck by a hit-skip motorist while in the crosswalk which connects the Pick-n-Pay with Central National Bank. According to Chief Lentz, the victims were taken to Huron Road Hospital, where they were treated and released. The driver was later apprehended.

F. David Gill

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News Briefs..... Open Pantry is actively pushing a local option vote in the Coventry area. On November 7, voters in Ward 1, Precincts B and K will decide whether high beer and wine can be sold on Sunday. Irv's Deli would also be covered by this.

CNI extends a warm welcome to Cleveland Heights police officer Jim Repicky, the new foot patrol officer in the commercial district. Why not take a minute to introduce yourself to Jim the next time you see him?

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