



COVENTRY

VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

July 1998

From the President's Pen

Whoa! What a difference a month makes. If you missed the last two monthly meetings, you missed the main reason this organization is in existence.

COVENTRY PARKING

Two months ago, the city asked if they could present a new plan for parking at our May meeting. We of course agreed and placed notice of the event in that newsletter. About a dozen residents showed up as City Manager, Robert Downey explained the new ideas that were being discussed. The first was a change in traffic pattern on Hampshire and Lancashire Roads to one-way. That would allow for parking on both sides of the street. The second was a plan to dramatically change the median strip on Euclid Heights Boulevard. That plan would transform the land from Coventry Road to Lancashire Road into parking spaces. As the Coventry merchants watched, the twelve resident in attendance gave both plans a cautious approval. They did suggest that the plan for the median strip **MUST** be done tastefully, with landscaping figured into the design to provide something other than an asphalt runway. They suggested that carefully planned, with space for green would make it more appealing for residents and visitors. The traffic pattern changes received even less conversation. The participants did ask for the assurance of the city that it could be reversed if the plan met with disfavor.

A few days before the June meeting, the city passed out flyers to the residents of both streets informing them of the new traffic patterns that would take effect after the weekend. For people who had not attended the May Coventry Neighbors meeting this was the first notice of the change. Prior to this note, the city had failed to inform the residents who would be directly effected by this action. They were kept in the dark and they were upset! They arrived in full force at the June meeting ready to define their position. They were convinced the city had intentionally bypassed the residents of the two streets because they knew they would be shouted down. Instead, they felt they approached Coventry Neighbors as a selected audience, predetermined to buy the proposal. It was an exciting exchange of ideas and this organization was designed to be just that type of forum.

At the end of the meeting, a motion was made to establish a multi-organizational congress to discuss parking in our neighborhood. Coventry Neighbors, Coventry Village Special Investment District, North Coventry Landlord Association and Coventry PEACE should all be involved **TOGETHER** for the greater good. Later that month, three of the four organizations did meet, along with Chuck Owen, a representative of Hampshire Road.

We discussed possibilities and approaches to solving our mutual problem. While some ideas will continue to be discussed, we did agree that more widespread discussions need to be conducted on the Euclid Heights median strip idea. Below is a letter we sent to the city, which demands additional public discussion on the proposal.

The city approached Coventry Neighbors in April with the idea of discussing some new parking solutions at their May meeting. They of course agreed. The meeting occurred and shortly thereafter one of the two proposals was put into effect. (One-way traffic patterns on Hampshire and Lancashire Roads.) What we didn't know at the time of the meeting was that the city did not notify or invite residents who were directly effected by this change. Collectively, we believe that to have been a flawed plan of action.

The June meeting of Coventry Neighbors was an explosion of emotions essentially aimed around, "the sneaky methods by which our city operates."

We all want to exist harmoniously in a community of neighbors. We do not want selective announcements of change in our community to occur again. Before proceeding with the second portion of the Coventry parking solution, we insist that you hold a public meeting (Coventry Neighbors can again host it if you like) which is widely advertised and aggressively promoted outside the confines of our organized groups. Affected neighbors should be clearly notified of the meeting.

At the June meeting of Coventry Neighbors, that organization was put in the position of defending the city. The CVSID was treated as an evil coconspirator and the city's reputation was irreparably damaged. It served no one and hurt everyone.

We urge you to change your tactics and do it properly. Convene a universal community meeting this time. We all remain committed to help in any way, just ask.

At the June 15th Cleveland Heights City Council meeting, Coventry Neighbors, various Coventry merchants and some affected residents spoke during the public forum portion of the meeting. There was widespread appeal for an all-inclusive parking study and solution for the Coventry neighborhood. Despite the number of voices, Mayor Ed Kelley made it very clear that no additional money was available and our request would not be granted.

It appears that much work needs to be done in order to bridge this ever-expanding gap.

THE CENTRUM THEATRE

At the same meeting Charles Zuchowski, owner of the Centrum Theatre building asked to speak. He wanted to explain the road ahead, for his building and what that meant to the neighborhood. The city told him if he has any plans he should go to the neighborhood first, before talking to the city. Basically, Mr. Zuchowski wants to expand the theater. In order to do that he is pursuing the purchase of the apartment building directly west of his structure. He asked us for a letter that he could forward to the city, endorsing his proposal. While we could not wholly support the plan, we did agree to write the following for him.

At the June 9, 1998 meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc., Charles Zuchowski, owner of the Centrum Theatre building explained the business situation that has resulted from the recent acquisition of the Landmark Theatre chain by Silver Screens Cinema. He outlined his need to expand the Centrum complex by adding four, 150 seat auditoriums with standard size screens. He explained that failure to complete this proposal would result in loss of his distribution contract and probably result in the closing of the theater. He told us that the city instructed him to get the blessing of the "neighbors" in order to proceed.

The attendees unanimously agreed that the continued presence and prosperity of the Centrum Theatre is an important and integral aspect of our community. Its loss would be devastating to our neighborhood's renaissance. We encouraged Mr. Zuchowski to explore this development project without our endorsement at this time and to return to us when he could share his vision in greater detail. This DOES NOT, in any sense constitute a rejection of his proposal.

Coventry Neighbors has recently begun to forge stronger ties with the other Coventry organizations: CVSID, North Coventry Landlords Association and Coventry PEACE. We all share common concerns about parking and traffic in particular. Coventry Neighbors, at the direction of those assembled on June 9th, was asked to organize discussions with the city on an all-inclusive master plan for the Coventry community. It should look at remaining developmental potential, developmental limits, parking and traffic. Landlords, tenants of neighboring apartments and multifamily homes, homeowners, the library, the school, the PEACE playground and business owners concerns must all be included.

It would be easier to offer stronger endorsements to a proposal such as Mr. Zuchowski's with a clearer picture of how it affected the whole Coventry community. We believe that any remaining Coventry development should be carefully studied for its impact, both positive and negative, on all members of the community. A careful balance is required so that this continues to be a good place for us all. Blindly saying, "Yes" or "No" will not suffice, planning is needed to protect and strengthen our neighborhood.

Stay tuned, this should be an interesting issue!

HOUSING DETERIORATION

While the issue of our business district remained on the front burner, the crusade for more responsible housing regulations and maintenance continued. I have started conversations with Ben Greenberg, President of Cain Park Landlords Association. I

attended their June 24th meeting at city hall. The Cain Park Landlord's scope is a bit different than ours is. Obviously, they are business people gathering to protect their investment in Cleveland Heights by educating landlords in the business of "landlording". The outcome of their efforts is however, remarkably similar to our cry for a just dissemination of housing inspection justice. During the meeting, they proposed some ideas that I believe we could also use.

- They use a series of street captains to re-enforce the concerns of the neighborhood. If a resident or landlord calls the city or police about a problem, they also call the street captain who, in turn, follows-up on the issue with a call of their own.
- They send letters of concern directly to errant landlords. By taking the issues of trash, lawn care, tenant concerns and house maintenance to the source, it must certainly have an impact.
- They document and tally the problems that occur at each address. This list can later be used to defend their position with the city, police, landlords or tenants at a future date.
- They have informed Judge Lynn Toler that they intend on sitting in court and watching her actions as they relate to housing infractions. I have already voiced my personal support to this action.

Their organization appears to be a success. After existing for a very short time, it was the opinion of the guest/residents at the meeting and the landlords present, that the neighborhood was indeed improving.

Mean while, addresses of offending neighborhood properties continue to come to me. Please know that I am personally discussing each one of the offenders with the city. Following is an update on some:

- 3015 Washington Blvd. The landlord of this property has evicted the offending tenants. The Used car lot business will soon end.
- 1935 Coventry Road. The county court system has agreed that the city has the right to enter the property and maintain it for the incapable owner. Changes are currently being made.
- 1804 Cadwell Road. This property is currently in the court system.

We have also received an answer to our letter to Judge Toler. Following is her response:

Thank you for your letter of June 16, 1998. My duty as judge is to be a fair and impartial adjudicator of fact and as such I must consider each case on its own individual merits. Moreover, I am not permitted to make representations as to the manner in which I intend to sentence a certain class of defendants. That notwithstanding, I would like to assure you that I am aware of the housing problem and am continually making improvements to insure that housing court is taking seriously and is as effective as it can be.

While housing represents less than 10% of my docket I have devoted more attention to it than any other single aspect of the court. From reading a number of studies on urban encroachment and visiting other housing courts, I have learned that a solely judicial response to housing concerns, no matter how implemented, is traditionally ineffective. Nevertheless, I have continued my efforts to improve this court's effectiveness by: (1) hiring a full time housing officer whose sole function is to help defendants come into compliance through on-going over

sight and assistance in locating financial resources; (2) establishing a bond requirement system for housing defendants; (3) establishing stricter time constraints for compliance; (4) increasing the number of executed arrest warrants for housing violators; (5) requiring sworn financial disclosure statements for those claiming indigence and (6) requiring information which could impact on sentencing (such as prior convictions) at the initial appearance. While these changes over the past five years have increased this courts success rate in garnering compliance, I have yet to attain the results I desire, therefore my efforts continue.

I hope my response helps you understand that I do take housing matters seriously and that I endeavor to run a court that is effective in all aspects of its administration.

Sincerely yours,

Lynn C. Toler, Judge, Cleveland Heights Municipal Court

While we have spent a lot of time lately talking about neighbors who do not maintain their property, we have spent little time praising those who do. I believe it is time to also recognize our neighbors who take special care of their property. If you have such a neighbor, send their name to me. Coventry Neighbors will send them a letter stating that their neighbors appreciate the time and energy they take with their home. Your name will not appear on the letter, only the organization's. If you know of a deserving owner, take a few minutes and fill out the form below. Mail it to me and I'll be sure they get the recognition they deserve.

THANKYOU

Lee Batdorf had some very nice things to say about the Coventry Village News in an editorial letter which was published in the Sun Newspaper last month. Thanks Lee, it is always nice to hear that someone is listening and appreciates our hard work.

THE JUNE ISSUE

Some of you may have heard a rumor that we published a June issue of our newsletter. A last minute decision was made to put together a "special" June edition of the Coventry Village News. Because of the diminishing time and due to the fact that the issue would not arrive in the hands of our members before the June meeting, we decided not to mail them. The newsletter was instead handed out to residents who live very close to the Coventry business district. All the articles dealt with parking and the needs of both tenants and business customers for it. The residents in that area are the most affected. We later realized that it was a flawed decision. The Coventry Neighbors members should always be kept informed. For that reason, we have elected to reprint last months articles. Members, please accept our apology. We'll be more conscientious next time.

FROM OUR SPECIAL EDITION:

Dear Coventry Neighborhood

At our meeting last May, Cleveland Heights City Manager Bob Downey presented two design solutions to parking problems in Coventry. Now, some of you are going to say, "What parking problems; the deck was supposed to take care of that," while others of you will say, "About time!"—because one's perception of whether or not there is a problem seems to depend on what you own, or where you live or work or shop. There are different parking problems in different areas.

One solution to the Coventry Road merchants' parking problem, based on research done by Tommy Felo of Tommy's Restaurant, would be to make Lancashire and lower Hampshire one-way streets in the apartment district. This would allow parallel parking on both sides of these streets, rather than just one side. You will remember we experienced a test run of this on Lancashire a couple years ago.

Another possible solution to the merchants' need for more parking would be to convert the boulevard strip on Euclid Heights Boulevard into a recessed parking area from the first cut through across from the theater down to the second cut through where Lancashire intersects. Coventry Neighbors was amused to have the city bring up this solution because years ago, way back when we were all talking about whether there was a need for a parking deck, Coventry Neighbors came up with this very solution and was told by the city that there was no way the median strip was going to be used for parking. Not so much because of the loss of "green space" as because of perception of potential increased vehicular accidents on that busy street. The current plan deals with that.

Of those attending that Coventry Neighbors meeting, the general response to both these solutions was largely favorable, with no criticisms of the Lancashire/Hampshire conversions, and minimal criticism of the Boulevard conversion. One protest was registered concerning loss of open space. Most attendees were more concerned that such a solution be well-designed and well-executed. The city has not made up its mind to undertake this solution and more input—pro or con—is desired.

Although it is the merchants who are presently hollering the loudest about the parking problem because it is causing them lost business, Coventry school also has a parking problem, as do residents of near-by residential streets. Recently representatives of four Coventry organizations—DVSID, DNI, NCLA, and PEACE—met to begin to explore common ground and discover common goals. Why? Because we recognize that individually we are only separate, fairly weak bands of "Urban Warriors", with limited ability for accomplishment. Together, as an army, much more becomes possible.

What is the war we are fighting? Upper- and middle-class flight (of all colors) to the suburban fringe—Solon, Bentleyville, and boom-town Twinsburg (where there really is open space worth saving, with ledges and wetlands with herons and beaver dams, and at last real working farm and forests, and Tinker's Creek, the Cuyahoga River's largest tributary stream). We want to keep Cleveland Heights and specifically the walking neighborhood of Coventry economically vital, socially diverse, and culturally rich.

How to do that? Not by going back to the way things used to be... however much we might wish for it... which is what Thomas Wolfe meant when her wrote, "You can't go home again." We need to acknowledge our problems and find consensus in developing solutions. We have to be creative in our thinking about what an inner-ring suburb of the future should look like. Do we try to recreate the outer-ring suburbs (and that *get-in-the-car-to-go-anyplace* frame of reference) or do we build on what makes an inner-ring suburb desirably different? And what do you think constitutes that?

One problem we know we have is parking and so that is a place to begin. Here are the other organized voices of Coventry to tell you what parking problems are for their particular constituency:

From North Coventry Landlord Association:
Dear Coventry Village Friends:

The North Coventry neighborhood, a multi family district of Coventry Village bordered by Mayfield Road, Coventry Road, Superior Road and Avondale Road has, over the past two decades, taken a turn for the worse. Like any multi-family, non-owner occupied community the North Coventry neighborhood has special needs which, when neglected, result in many of the problems that have plagued some of the areas surrounding Cleveland Heights. Problems, such as drug dealing, leading to safety concerns which have kept families that would otherwise be attracted to this neighborhood away with a resulting decline or stagnation in property values. Over the past several years many residents and landlords in the North Coventry area with the support and assistance of Mayor Ed Kelly and the Police Department have made great strides in improving the safety of the neighborhood by reducing the level of drug activity.

We have seen renewed interest in the North Coventry neighborhood from many university students and young families. They are attracted to the neighborhood's proximity to downtown, the University Circle area and most importantly the vibrancy of our Coventry neighborhood. Unfortunately, there remains a major stumbling block to many who would otherwise wish to make their home in this neighborhood and that is the parking situation.

Developed as a neighborhood of multi-family homes in the 1920's and 30's, at a time when automobile ownership was considered a luxury, each apartment unit was designed to support, at most, one automobile. In today's world an automobile is no longer a luxury, but a necessity, whether it be for transportation to work, school, the doctors office or grocery shopping most adults require a car. This reality in the North Coventry neighborhood effectively prohibits many families and graduate students who would be attracted to residing in this neighborhood from taking up residency. Multi-family units built to support one or less cars per unit in the 1920's must now be able to support two or more cars per unit to meet today's needs.

Unfortunately, the city government has not kept pace with the changing needs of today's world. This has been personified by its' resistance to modifying the parking restrictions in the North Coventry neighborhood. There are other multi-family neighborhoods within our city borders which have benefited greatly from the city's modification of parking regulations in order to meet the needs of the residents. Streets such as Hampshire, Lancashire and Overlook have remained desirable to young professionals, graduate students and empty nesters in large part because they have been able to support the parking needs of these individuals.

The Coventry business district has witnessed a rebirth over the past several years. The North Coventry neighborhood has begun to take part in this rebirth with millions of dollars being invested in improvements to properties and a new sense of pride emerging in the neighborhood from both long term residents as well as

newcomers. North Coventry is an integral part of Coventry Village sharing the same concerns, elementary school, parks, housing stock and business district. Resent improvements to Coventry Village have come from all sectors of our community from city government to businesses and residents. These changes will help Coventry to remain a vibrant, exciting community to live in well into the next century. The renewed interest in the area by young families is a testament to the success and hard work of many within our community.

We must continue to work together as a single community in order to nurture the vibrancy of our neighborhood and continue it's success. A liberalization of the parking restrictions in North Coventry will make the neighborhood more attractive to many who desire to be part of our vibrant community, but who also require a car in order to carry out their daily routine. This in turn should bring more stability and with it a sense of community to North Coventry thereby making the entire Coventry Village area stronger.

Sincerely,
Adam Waldbaum, North Coventry Landlord

Following is a letter the Coventry Village S.I.D. sent to each member of Cleveland Heights city council concerning the merchant's concerns over parking:

Following the parking meeting two weeks ago, we were convinced that the City of Cleveland Heights and the Planning Commission were committed to attacking the very real problem of parking in the Coventry Village area. The entire Board of Trustees of the Coventry Village Special Improvement District and the merchants of Coventry Village were very impressed that these two legislative bodies were doing more than simply paying "lip service" to the problem; that you were taking immediate action.

Now, after our regular scheduled meeting of May 21, we find that these two projects are really not on a "fast track". Apparently, there is to be at least one more community meeting about the Euclid Heights Median Strip plan and there is no immediate date to change Lancashire and Hampshire Roads to one-way streets.

The Coventry Village Special Improvement District, its Board of Trustees and the merchants of Coventry Village don't need any more meetings to tell them that there is a parking problem in our area. Indeed, not only are the merchants facing this problem, but the entire Coventry Village area.

We are thoroughly convinced that this is a problem that will not only not go away, but one that will most certainly get worse throughout the summer. And while these aforementioned modest projects are not a complete solution, they are certain to help alleviate the dramatic parking problem we face.

And while we are grateful that Council helped to create us last year, it is the Special Improvement District that has allowed us to look beyond the immediate future of the Village and into the future. If the parking problem is not addressed, with full enthusiasm, creativity and force, we believe the consequences for the Coventry Village will not be pretty.

We are asking for your support for the quick implementation of the aforementioned programs and your continued support of other parking projects; both imminent and those in the future. Our continued growth depends upon it.

Jeffrey R. Dross
President, Coventry Neighbors



WELCOME

The Coventry Branch of the CH-UH Library has a new Branch Manager. Vicki Victoria joined us last month for her first Coventry Neighbors meeting. She introduced herself and commented about the things that she hopes to do in her new position. She promised to try and become a faithful attendee at our meetings. Good Luck and welcome to the neighborhood!

Wrap & Roll, a "gourmet wrap sandwich" shop has just opened inside Arabica. They make health conscious meals rolled in a tortilla-like wrap. Sounds like a great idea. Best of luck. We're glad you're here!

COVENTRY FOOD & MUSIC FESTIVAL

A proposal is being put together to hold a food and music festival in the Coventry Elementary schoolyard on Sunday September 13, 1998 from noon to 8:00 p.m. The event would feature food from various restaurants in Cleveland Heights and music performed in two locations in the yard. At the next meeting, more details will be provided. If you're a neighboring resident, you may want to come to the next meeting to hear the details.

IS THERE A HOUSE ON YOUR BLOCK THAT NEEDS HELP?????

A house in my block is a disgrace to the city:

Address

Please help me help my neighborhood.

Your name (optional)

Mail to:

Jeff Dross, President Coventry Neighbors
[Redacted]
Cleveland, Heights, OH 44118-2010

**JOIN US AT OUR REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 14, 7:40 P.M.
AT
THE COVENTRY LIBRARY**

At the July meeting we intend on discussing:

The Coventry parking issue and where we go from here.

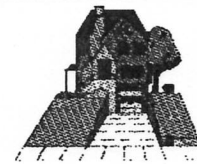
- A proposal for a food and music festival in the Coventry schoolyard will be presented.
- The housing issue and whether or not we can adapt some of the ideas learned from the Cain Park Village Landlords Association. Also, we need to clarify our method of congratulating successful homeowners for nice property.
- The NEORS hole is getting closer and closer to being capped. We have passed over this topic during the last few months. We need to revisit and plan for this project.
- And naturally anything else you'd like to talk about.

Remember to come on time. The meetings have been very vocal lately and have run overtime. The library staff has been very understanding, but we shouldn't press our good fortune.

We look forward to seeing you

AUGUST VACATION

Remember that Coventry Neighbors does not hold a meeting in August. Enjoy the summer and join us for more neighborhood excitement on Tuesday September 8, 1998 at 7:45 P.M. in the Coventry Library Meeting Room.



**THERE IS A WELL-MAINTAINED HOUSE
IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD.
I believe the owners should be commended
for their EXTRA effort.**

(Address)

Your name (optional)

Mail to:

Jeff Dross, President Coventry Neighbors
[Redacted]
Cleveland, Heights, OH 44118-2010

Coventry Village News is published by Coventry Neighbors, Inc. The newsletter is distributed free throughout Coventry Village. Mailed subscriptions are available. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:40 p.m. at the Coventry Village Library, Euclid Heights Boulevard. & Coventry Road.

When you join Coventry Neighbors, Inc. you can be sure of having a voice in shaping your neighborhood's future. Membership includes a subscription to the Coventry Village News.

Editor: Bruce Biddle

Editorial Board: Jeff Dross, Elsa Johnson, Bob Klemenc

How to reach us: You may contact us by mail at:

Coventry Neighbors Inc. c/o Jeff Dross, President ████████████████████	or	Coventry Village News c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor ████████████████████
Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118		Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Individual \$7.50 Family \$10 Senior Citizen \$5

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP CODE _____ PHONE _____

CNI needs street representatives to communicate with the local neighborhoods and assist with the delivery of the newsletter.

YES! I would like to assist CNI by becoming a CNI representative for my street.

Please return this form with your check to:

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.
c/o Bob Klemenc
████████████████████
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

COVENTRY Village News

c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

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Cleveland Heights, OH 44118