
Disorderly Conduct Law Struck

Judge Sara Hunter of the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court ruled this past month that a local municipal ordinance which outlawed disorderly conduct was unconstitutional. In doing so, she dismissed the case against James A. Williams, 37, a Cleveland teacher. The case began when Williams was arrested at a party on Coventry Road near Mayfield after arguing with policemen.

The judge's ruling made unnecessary any consideration of whether the law had actually been violated in this instance. The ordinance defined disorderly conduct as quarreling, wrangling, or using obscene or profane language. In Judge Hunter's opinion, this ordinance was too vague and in violation of freedom of speech.

The incident which resulted in the arrest came after police respended to a landlord's complaint about a loud party. Witnesses say that Williams began arguing with the police about a parking ticket on his car for violating the 3:00-5:00 a.m. ordinance, and the arrest followed soon after.

OUR NEXT MEETING OF COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. WILL BE ON TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1976 at 8:00 p.m. AT THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY ON LANCASHIRE ROAD. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

May 11, 1976: CNI Agenda

- 1. Guest Speaker: Re Proposed City Income Tax Increase
- 2. Minutes of the meeting of April 12, 1976 Janet St. Clair
- 3. Financial Report Ester Brodsky
- 4. 1976 Coventry Street Fair: Status Report
- 5. Council Report David Burwasser
- School Report Mary Picken; School Levy Report Ruth Miller
- 6. Old Business
- 7. New Business
- 8. Next Meeting

GREAT KIWANIS GARAGE SALE

On Saturday, May 15, there will be an opportunity for three groups to get together at the Cleveland Heights Pavilion between 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Under the supervision of the Kiwanis Club of Cleveland Heights, residents holding on to odds and ends, merchants with excess inventory, and bargain hunters fed up with driving all over Cleveland Heights will be able to get it all together at one big community garage sale.

Thousands of items will be displayed under one roof, including household goods, clothes, shoes, baby items, toys, furniture, appliances, records, books, jewelry, garden supplies, art work, fine china and silver, hand tools, sports equipment, and much more.

(more)

Items will be taken on consignment. People who wish to sell goods should bring them to the Pavilion (corner of Superior and Mayfield Roads) on Friday, May 14th between 3:00 and 9:00 p.m. For more information, call Ray Fredman (371-1964), George Vanda (382-7190), or Don Rushlin (382-9950).

HOUSING PRESERVATION ADVISOR

Even if you're a Coventry Village apartment-dweller, you might want to buy a house in Cleveland Heights someday, and there's a chance that Marcia Nolan, the City's Housing Preservation Advisor, is worrying at this moment about the upkeep of your future home. Marcia, who is known to many of us from her work in Coventry Neighbors, Inc., and among the Coventry Merchants, operates out of the Cleveland Heights Planning Department's offices. Her job is to reduce the number of people who get hauled to Municipal Court on housing violations, by smoothing the way for them to finance the repairs needed to correct the violation. That sounds simple enough, but only brushes the surface of the complexities Marcia handles.

Typically, Marcia will become involved in a case on referral from the Building Department when an inspector discerns that there may be difficulty correcting a violation. The inspector may take the case directly to Marcia, or refer the homeowner to her. Most of her cases to date have involved owner-occupants, usually of single-family homes. Much of her activity is by phone or letter, but she does make "house-calls" when appropriate. She will supply information on reliable contractors, and counseling in step-by-step planning of the repairs or corrections. Where there is a financing problem--and that is the usual reason for Marcia being brought in--she will explore such possibilities as the Challenge Fund (a church-sponsored fund for low interest home improvement loans), a credit union, or a bank or savings & loan that is flexible in a way that facilitates this particular loan. Most importantly, perhaps, she puts a human face on the process of keeping the City's housing stock up to standards. In one instance, for example, she arranged to have an enforcement deadline put off until the owner, who suffers a respiratory ailment, could work his way through the Workman's Compensation red tape and be able to finance the repairs himself.

Part of Marcia's job has been to gather information on lending practices of local banks and savings & loans. Will they make a loan to an elderly person? To a recent buyer, who holds little equity in the property? Will they take the second mortgage on a home on which they do not hold the first mortgage? Marcia also keeps track of realty sales, vacant homes and foreclosures; part of her task is mortgage delinquency counseling, and she has averted one foreclosure in the Coventry area already. This information will become part of a data base for the City's new Financial Institution Advisory Committee.

Marcia has also been led into the world of the mortgage market. To the lender, a mortgage is a form of investment for profit, and there is a nation-wide "stock market" in mortgages just as there is in stocks and bonds. A given mortgage may be part of an institutional "portfolio" and receive no more personal concern than one item in a stock portfolio. There is also a mortgage

insurance industry, which insures the mortgage holder--not the homeowner.

All of these institutions make mortgages easier to come by, by making it easier and safer for capital to flow into mortgages, but they also create severe problems. Becuase of their size and scope, these institutions are not concerned with fine details or local problems. They can move a low-income buyer to a house requiring repairs far beyond the buyer's means; or arrange a mortgage for a family too large, legally, for the house being purchased. Such oversight is especially likely when a realtor, unable to arrange financing, turns the problem over to a mortgage broker who in turn approaches a large institution based out-of-state. With responsibility split so many ways, important details can "fall through the cracks." Finally, if an institutionally-owned house falls vacant and cannot be profitably sold, it is likely to stand vacant and deteriorating unless pressure can be brought to bear on the institution by local authorities. All of these lead, by one route or another, to deterioration of housing stock, and become part of the job--and the headache--of Marcia Nolan.

In one Instance, a large family had acquired with the help of the VA--which provides both loans and mortage insurance--a home in adequate shape, but with insufficient sleeping area per occupant. Floor space can be counted toward living area, under the building code, only if the ceiling above it exceeds a certain minimum height; the solution was to raise the ceiling level over some third-story floor area by putting in dormers. Marcia helped arrange a home-improvement loan for the alteration.

In another case, a house owned by a mortgage company had stood vacant for months with serious code violations cited, but uncorrected. After research by Marcia to identify the owner, the mortgage firm was taken to Municipal Court and fined \$200 on the spot, with more severe fines held in abeyance conditional upon repairs prior to a set deadline. The City feels very good about this precedent and plans to use the court this way again as necessary.

The office of Housing Preservation Advisor was started in 1975. Marcia opened her doors on July 21, got her first case July 23, and has averaged about one a day ever since. The basic goal is to help the homeowner comply with the building code, not evade it. Marcia is convinced that compliance is in every resident's interest, because the value of every house on the block is influenced by the shape the other houses are in. Even deterioration that is invisible on the outside is influential. If a formerly \$40,000 home sells for \$25,000, the price that can be commanded by similar homes in the geographic area is undermined. Thus Marcia must occasionally act as an enforcer. "Some days I have to be a real bitch," she concedes. But her unhappy feelings on those occasions are more than offset by satisfaction when she can wind up a case in a way that permits someone who moved to Cleveland Heights because of its neighborhoods and schools to stay in the community and help keep its quality without financial strain.

- Dave Burwasser

VOTER REGISTRATION ENDS MAY 10TH. YOU CAN REGISTER TO VOTE AT ANY BRANCH OF THE CLEVELAND HEIGHTS - UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY, AT BOTH CLEVELAND HEIGHTS AND THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS CITY HALLS, AT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, AND AT JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY. IT'S EASY AND IT'S PAINLESS. AND IT'S IMPORTANT!

Huge Turn-Out for Hampshire Road Day

Close to 200 Hampshire Road residents and building owners worked May 1st to green and clean the block, participating in what all agreed was a highly successful clean-up day. A party held the same evening, on the vacant lot between 2656 Hampshire and 2644 Hampshire, gave many of the participants a chance to relax together after the work was done.

Several said they wished that the city-owned lot would be cleaned and developed, so that everybody in the area could enjoy the open space regularly.

The clean-up day was sponsored by the Hampshire Road Association, an organization of residents and owners of property on Hampshire Road between Overlook and COventry. From 8:00 a.m. to about 5:30 p.m., both owners and tenants were outside, hauling junk, planting greenery, and doing innumerable other clean-up and maintenance jobs.

Over 100 bushes were planted up and down the block. Bob Brigden and Frank Boldizar, owners of 2734 Hampshire, not only planted bushes, but also put grass seed down all around their property, and planted new trees on the tree lawn. They hauled away over one and a half tons of old coal that had been lying in their basement, and moved almost a truckload of dirt in the process of planting.

Across the street, the tenants of 2741 Hampshire, a building owned by Avram Bendoly, cut the grass, trimmed all the bushes and hedges, put railroad tie borders around the garden beds, raked all leaves from the lawn, picked papers up all around the building, washed windows and cleaned the fire escapes.

Charlie Spademan, a tenant at 2741, said "everybody came out and did work. It was a marvelous experience, working together." Janet St. Clair and Peter Kibbe, also tenants of 2741, said that they had a good time working. "It was real," said Kibbe. Susan Twinning, Keith Howlett, Randy Hersey, Bill Van Eys and Ed Van Eys, also worked hard at 2741.

Robert Bradley, owner of 2640-38 Hampshire, put in new front and back grass lawns, planted new privet bushes, and laid a new concrete front sidewalk and back patio.

But the above are just a few examples of the work done. All day, lawnmowers hummed along the block. Just about everybody put huge piles of junk on the tree lawns and a pick-up truck, provided especially for the clean-up day by the City of Cleveland Heights, rummbled up and down the block hauling away things discarded.

The City also provided a volley ball net, volley balls, frisbees, badmitten equipment and the equipment for many other games that were played at the evening's party.

At one point, residents participated in a game dubbed "badvolleymitten" by Hampshire Road resident Rick Lundquist. It's played by holding a badmitten racket in one hand, and trying to hit a volley ball with the other. After a while, a frisbee was being thrown back and forth also, so you just stood on your side of the net and hit, caught, or batted whatever came over.

Lundquist and Kermit Lind contributed the funds which made the party and other parts of the day possible. Sandra Levine and Jan St. Clair planned the party. (more)

Each resident brought his own hot dogs, hamburgers or chicken, which all cooked and shared. Unfortunately, rain which had been threatening all day, finally came at 9:00 p.m., cutting the party short. A band, led by Keith Howlett (who also helped plan the day's events) could not perform.

"I really got a chance to see the friendly spirit on this block," said Bob Brigden, referring to the fact that everybody was sharing tools and advice all day. At the end of the work, many people just stood outside their homes, looking at their accomplishments, satisfied grins on their faces.

"I got a bunch of @#\$%¢!!! blisters on my hands," said Bebe Levine, "from washing and sweeping my porch and cleaning my windows." Debe had also printed the signs to advertise the event.

Clean-Up Day Coordinator, Larry Rubin, presented a letter of thanks to the City Council for its cooperation.

Other people who made the day possible were Bart Woodward, Lisa Soule, Renee Fleckenstein, Derek Milliron, Mary Manning and Zoot.

- Larry Rubin

HCC IS HAVING A PARTY.....AND YOU ARE INVITED!

Come and celebrate the recognition given to Cleveland Heights as an All-American City. The Heights Community Congress is sponsoring a party on Saturday, June 5th at the Clevelad Heights Pavilion from 8:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. There will be dancing to the music of Lou Elgart, beer, snacks, and fun. Tickets are \$5 per person.

Proceeds of this party will help the HCC raise some badly needed funds from the community to match foundation monies and ticket donations are tax-deductible. Moreover, if you have dinner at certain Cleveland Heights restaurants before the dance and turn your receipt over to the HCC, 10-15% of your bill will go to the HCC. Participating restaurants are:

Au Province Brown Derby Earth by April Out to Eat (Jayson's) Light of Yoga Michaelangelo's

For ticket information and reservations, call 321-6775.

The Annual Book Sale, sponsored by the Friends of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library will be held Thursday, June 10th through Saturday, June 12th. For the first time, the Sale will be held at the Cleveland Heights Pavilion (Superior and Mayfield Roads) instead of at the Main Library. There will be many fine bargains for 50¢ and less, and all proceeds will be used to help support our fine library system. Please come, browse, and buy!

WANTED: Someone to do lawn work and other light jobs. Call Mrs. Levin at 321-9161.

Housing Solicitation Ain't Just Bad...Sometimes It's Illegal

If you are a homeowner, you should be aware of Resolutions 26-1976 and 27-1976, passed March 15, 1976 by the Cleveland Heights City Council. Under these laws, you have protection against real estate agents who would harass you over your private telephone. But the protection does not work for you--or anyone else--unless you help.

A homeowner who does not wish to sell his home and who does not wish to be telephoned <u>must</u> sign a card stating this to be the case, if he is to be covered under the new law. Cards will be distributed throughout the community and are available at the Division of Community 5 Public Relations at City Hall. A list of persons who have sent cards to City Hall will, in turn, be distributed to the real estate industry.

If you have signed a card and are then solicited, your help becomes crucial. Your call to Community Relations (321-0100 Ext. 287) will alert the City and bring the enforcement mechanism of the new laws into play. Your silence may well encourage and promote blockbusting, racial steering, and other tactics which are undermining the stability of neighborhoods.

The new laws and the procedures they establish mark an honest attempt to