



# Coventry Village News

October, 1988

The Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors, Inc.

Volume 12 No. 9

## Councilmen Edwards and Montlack will talk with us at October 11 meeting

Charter amendment is main issue; they'll discuss other subjects, too

CNI officer elections that night

Carol Edwards and Ken Montlack, both members of Cleveland Heights City Council, will meet with Coventry Neighbors, Inc. (CNI) at the monthly meeting to be held Tuesday, October 11, 7:45 PM, at Coventry Village Library, 1925 Coventry Road. Everyone is welcome at the meeting and invited to join in discussions, but only dues-paid members will be allowed to vote.

We invited representatives of City Council to discuss an amendment to the City Charter which will be on the November 8 ballot. Mr. Montlack and Ms. Edwards have agreed to discuss with us other subjects as well.

The Charter amendment in question will add a single paragraph to the City government's constitutional document. The new paragraph makes explicit the "home rule" powers of the City. Home rule is the power of municipal governments, granted to them in the Ohio Constitution, to make laws of their own. Local law may differ from state law when the issue is of purely local concern; in matters of state-wide concern, state law governs.

Home rule is nothing new. Chartered cities like Cleveland Heights have had these powers from their beginnings. Legal experts believed until recently that simply being a chartered city in the State of Ohio gave the local government these powers.

Then, in June of this year, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that, in order for a community to exercise powers of home rule, its charter must *explicitly* claim that authority. The Cleve-

land Heights City Charter made no such explicit claim, it always having been assumed here and in hundreds of other cities, that merely having a charter gave home rule powers to local governments. Thus the proposed amendment in no way changes the powers of our local government; it is, according to Cleveland Heights Law Director John Gibbon, just a bit of "legal housekeeping," made necessary by an Ohio Supreme Court ruling that he sharply

*Continued on page 2*

## City now appears ready to move on Rock Court parking and other large jobs in business district

Staff of the municipal government is now—*finally*—actively seeking funding for a substantial new addition to the supply of public parking in the business district of Coventry Village. Funding for such other efforts as the replacement of sidewalks and the addition of some amenities—more park benches, maybe an information kiosk—is also being discussed.

During the last week of September, members of the Planning Department staff were preparing a request for \$200,000 from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. That request was to be made on Thursday, September 29, at a meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee, a group that

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### Note: November meeting a week later than usual

The November meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc., will be held a week later than usual, on November 18. CNI usually meets on the second Tuesday of each month. But in November this year, the second Tuesday is Election Day.

**Vote on November 8**

**Charter amendment . . . from page 1**  
criticized. Gibbon expects most other cities to seek similar charter amendments.

The proposed Charter amendment is of central importance to the legal structure of our local government. Without this amendment, it would be impossible to enforce many local laws—all local law for which parallel state law exists. Most local law—governing such things as building construction and maintenance, land use, and traffic—would be wiped out, leaving Cleveland Heights to be governed entirely and exclusively by State law.

### Events planned for next summer

CNI resolved at its September meeting to proceed with planning for a series of events more or less like those sponsored by the organization this past summer.

Some changes will necessary, especially on the financial side of the events. For instance, merchants were invited to set up on the sidewalks; there was no charge for this privilege. There will be next year.

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Phone: 371-6095.

**Coventry Village . . .**  
*where we all get along together  
pretty well.*

Merchants consistently reported that they has especially good business volume on the day of last summer's major events. Yet only a few of them have contributed to the costs of the events that brought those extra customers. CNI's decision on whether to go ahead with events next summer will depend largely on the willingness of merchants to contribute most of the costs.

### Organizational elections

CNI will hold its annual election of officers at the October meeting. At the September meeting, the following nominations were received: for President, Larry Beam; Vice President, Marilyn Pryor; Secretary, David O'Konski; Treasurer, Mary Ann Rodewald; and the two Trustees, Charles Owen and Mary Raynor. Subsequent to the meeting, Mr. O'Konski, who had been nominated *in absentia*, asked that his name be withdrawn; Mr. Owen also asked that his name be withdrawn. Nominations will again be opened at the October meeting.

No nominations were offered for the post of Trustee to the Heights Community Congress.

### Library Goings-on

Poetry readings, held at the Coventry Village Library on the first Sunday of each month, will now have sign language interpreters. Readings will be held on November 6 and December 4; we hope you will plan to attend. This is a unique opportunity to see the poetry of sign language, as well as to hear the work of Cleveland poets.

Sessions of Preschool Storytime, for ages three to five years, will begin on Tuesday, October 4, 7:00 to 7:30 PM; and Wednesday, October 5, 10:30 to 11:00 AM.

School-age Storytime, with stories and activities for school-age children, starts on October 4 at 2:30 PM.

### Discoveries, a musical series, at the Unitarian Society

Elizabeth Stewart, soprano, and Gurtano Parks, piano, will perform on October 9, 4:00 PM, at the Unitarian Society, 2728 Lanchashire Road in Coventry Village.

On November 6, Susan Krausz, a composer, pianist and teacher, will perform her own works, one of them a world premier.

A donation of \$5.00 from adults (students and senior citizens, \$3.00) is requested at the door.

### *Added parking . . . from page 1*

makes non-binding recommendations to City Council about how federal CDBG funds should be spent. [The deadline for this newsletter was two days earlier.] The CDBG program in Cleveland Heights now receives a little more than one million dollars annually from the Federal Government. Nearly twice as much federal tax money was funnelled back to this community before the present administration took power in Washington.

The September 29 presentation is likely to be quite sketchy. The request may be simply for '\$200,000 for parking in Coventry,' or other similarly vague language. The reason for the unclarity is that when the City does business with federal money (CDBG funds in this case) it must obey certain strict rules developed to minimize some problems that arose in the Urban Renewal programs of two decades ago.

In this case, the federal rules forbid the City from announcing its intention to acquire three old houses on Rock Court, behind Pick-n-Pay and Heights Cleaners, until the owners of those homes have received formal notification of the City's intentions. At the same time, the local government cannot make an offer to buy those houses until money has been allocated for that purpose, and parts of that allocation process—like the September 29 meeting—are open to the public.

In any case, \$200,000 isn't much money considering the needs of this old business district, the costs of property acquisition and construction, and the amounts spent on other similar areas of Cleveland Heights. Additional money could come from several sources. Council could simply allocate more than the staff request, or additional funding could be sought in next year's CDBG process. Actual construction work could still be more than a year off, because property acquisitions often move slowly, and because much planning remains to be done.

Some funds for work on Coventry will probably come from purely local sources. The City's Off Street Parking Fund, into which is paid some of the parking meter revenues, could be tapped. Commercial property owners could easily be assessed for the costs of replacing sidewalks and curbing. It is even possible that an assessment process could be used for costs of building a parking lot; now-pending legislation, sponsored by State Representative Jane

Campbell, would allow such use of assessments. The City could use some of its authority to issue un-voted general obligation bonds. In fact, the whole effort might cost a lot less if funding sources other than CDBG were used for acquiring those three houses, because the substantial relocation payments—required only when federal money is used—would be unnecessary.

Little has been decided so far about just what sort of new parking facility will be built. A parking "deck," a structure with two or more levels, like the one built in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood, between Surry and Lennox Roads, would be ideal, but costs might be too high. The City is apparently negotiating with First National Supermarkets, Inc., owners of Pick-n-Pay, over the possibility of including some or all of their parking lot in the new municipal facility. At the same time, Pick-n-Pay is in continuing negotiations with owners of Severance Center for a new Finast store there; City officials believe that Pick-n-Pay would leave Coventry if a Finast store is opened at Severance. —Larry Beam

### *San Francisco Mime Troupe to offer 'Ripped Van Winkle' at Heights High School*

The San Francisco Mime Troupe, winners of a 1987 Tony Award for best regional theater, will perform October 26 and 27, 8:00 PM, at Cleveland Heights High School.

The production, "Ripped Van Winkle," was written by the Troupe. It's about a man who fell asleep in the 1960's, and awoke twenty years later, unable to understand the changed world he found himself in.

Tickets are \$8.00 in advance and \$9.00 at the door; senior citizens and students pay just \$4.00. The event is sponsored by the High School and Cleveland Public Theatre.

### *Community Improvements Awards: October 16 at JCC*

Community Improvement Awards, given each year to local property owners who make especially nice visible improvements, will be announced at a ceremony on October 19, 7:30 PM, at the Jewish Community Center on Mayfield Road across from Severance Center.

The program is a joint effort of the City of Cleveland Heights and the Heights Community Congress.

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**It's time to renew memberships and subscriptions.**

The next regular meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, OCTOBER 11, at the Coventry Village Library.

Join Coventry Neighbors, Inc. Today! NEW MEMBERS GET 14 MONTHS FOR THE PRICE OF 12! IF YOU ARE ALREADY A MEMBER, EXTEND YOUR MEMBERSHIP THROUGH DECEMBER 1989. ALL MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRE AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

Please indicate the class of membership you want:

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