

# Coventry Village News

April, 1991

The Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors, Inc.

## Merchants Seek Second Chance

The 1800 Coventry Group's deal died last month and there was worry in Coventry Village that the neighborhood's finest stores might be forced to leave the area. The group, representing five businesses, had worked hard since November 1990 to put together a reasonable bid on the property.

They spent a lot of energy, time and money on this very complex deal and when owner Ken Ross turned down the deal, the group stood to lose \$67,000 on architects, lawyers, audits, appraisals and professional fees. (No group member charged for his or her own time or services).

But there is a flicker of hope that Ken Ross will agree to the new package to be offered early next week. "At least he's willing," said Tom Fello, of Tommy's restaurant.

The district's largest building (it fills the west side of the street from Hampshire to Lancashire) was damaged by fire in November 1988. Two years later, frustrated and angry about the slow progress toward repairs, merchant tenants began to talk seriously about purchasing the building themselves.

The entire neighborhood and city officials see the acquisition of this key building by its tenants as an essential catalyst to the long-frustrated revitalization of Coventry's commercial district. The essential appraisal for building rehab was \$700,000 just to bring it up to code.

### From the Docket For the Record . . .

#### Building code violations against William Ross Realty Company (Ken Ross) 8/9/90 :

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 8/9/89  | Case # : 89CRB 1425<br>Plea : No Contest<br>Penalty : \$150 fine + costs + five days in jail<br>Sentence : Suspended except \$50     |
|         | Case # : 89CRB 1444<br>Plea : No Contest<br>Sentence : Fine suspended, pay costs   |
| 5/31/89 | Case # : 89 CRB 1318<br>Plea : No Contest<br>Penalty : \$1,000 fine + seven days in jail<br>Sentence : \$50 fine , suspended balance |
|         | Case # : 89 CRB 979<br>Plea : Not Guilty<br>Sentence : Fine and jail suspended, pay costs  |
|         | Case # : 89 CRB 838<br>Plea : No Contest<br>Sentence : \$50 fine, pay costs  |
| 4/26/90 | Case # : 89 CRB 584<br>Case Dismissed  |
| 3/29/90 | Case # : 89 CRB 415<br>Case Dismissed  |

## ----- Theater To Reopen June 1 -----

### CNI Supports Preliminary Plans

Members of CNI packed the Coventry library meeting room March 12. As part of the evening's agenda, members reviewed plans for the theater building. Charles Zuchowski who purchased the building in 1989, brought along his attorney, architect and others of his team. Together they presented plans to bring life back into the neighborhood.

The plans included the need for 200 exclusive theater parking spaces. A preliminary plan for median strip parking on Euclid Heights Blvd. between Coventry and Lancashire was proposed as a partial solution. It would provide nearly 100 spaces.

After some debate, members voted to approve the preliminary plans and to acknowledge the need for 200

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**Code Enforcement :****Getting Involved in the Legal Process**

by Dave Burwasser

*Many thanks to people on both the court and administrative side of City Hall for their assistance in compiling this story. I was impressed, both with the effectiveness of the computer system in getting facts into the discussion so quickly and the cooperation of the people involved.*

So, there's a house in your Cleveland Heights neighborhood in such neglected condition that you feel it's draining the value from your home - in either the calculated sense of the resale value of your house or the affected sense in the feeling that the street is less than a nice place to live.

Or, there's a building in a nearby commercial area and you think its neglected condition is ruining the neighborhood. Whatever the problem, you sense that the laws governing building maintenance should be invoked. Or, you know or think that the neglected building is already involved in the legal process and you want to be sure that City Hall officials understand how serious the problem really is.

But how do you get involved in the legal process?

Let's start by assuming that no legal complaint has yet been registered against the offending property. How do you get that going?

First, understand that you will not start a neighbor-

hood feud between you and the property owner merely by invoking the law. Somebody must initiate a complaint. Then, the relevant City bureau takes over the investigation.

If the city thinks the complaint is valid, the legal action is not you versus the property owner but the City versus the property owner for two reasons: to protect property owners from being personally harassed by complaints and to protect complainants from being personally intimidated by property owners. Either way, this legal arrangement prevents the start of a vendetta.

But, there is one major exception to this protective arrangement. If you complain to the City about the condition of your own apartment, your landlord is going to have a pretty good idea of the source, even when the official complaint comes from City Hall. That is really a landlord/tenant problem and outside the scope of this article.

So, to make you complaint. . . For residential property, call Inspection Services at 291-5908. For commercial property, call the Building Department at 291-4900. That gets the ball rolling.

And perhaps that is all you want to do. But what if the City itself has already started the legal process? You may be willing to let the legal wheels grind on without further assistance. On the other hand, you may think the court could benefit from your particular knowledge of the situation. Is there more you can do?

**If you read no further, at least read this :  
DON'T WRITE TO THE JUDGE!**

Writing to the judge is not only improper, it can jeopardize the entire case. Court officials spent valuable time sharing stories with me about how anti-drinking and driving activists in southern Ohio shot themselves in the foot by writing to judges. The reason has to do with prejudicing the court and it's the same kind of caution that leads to locking-up juries in highly publicized trials.

But that doesn't leave you with nothing to do. If you want to add your observations to the legal process, you should write to Clerk of Courts, City of Cleveland Heights, 40 Severance Circle, Cleveland, Hts. OH 44118. This will get your contribution to the legal process in an appropriate manner. You are not helping to determine guilt or innocence but you are sharing information about the case assuming the complaint is upheld.

There's one catch. It's pointless to write if the case isn't in court yet.

The case - in the sense of the documents passing

Coventry Village News is published monthly by Coventry Neighbors Inc., in cooperation with the Heights Community Congress.

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Anyone wishing to submit copy to Coventry Village News may do so by sending it to the Editor, Coventry Village News, 2745 Hampshire Rd., Suite 2, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106. (321-1835).

The deadline for each month is the 18th day of the preceding month. While no unsigned material may be accepted, names may be withheld from publication at the writer's request.

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# Letters to the Editor

Please send letters to :

*Coventry Village News*  
2745 Hampshire Road  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106

Dear Editor,

As a long time resident of the Coventry area, I would like to express my support for the plans to reverse the decline of the Coventry commercial district. I am sure that this can be accomplished without interfering with the character of the single family home district.

The impression was given through the newsletter that Coventry Neighbors, Inc. believed it was desirable to promote rezoning the S-2 district and that additional parking was needed along Mayfield, not on the East Side of Coventry.

I am concerned about the mixed signal Coventry Neighbors has sent out concerning the desirability of a parking garage or other multi-storied structures in the Rock Court area. Such a structure is a prime symbol of the incessant commercial encroachment into our neighborhood.

There would be a much better chance of constructive cooperation between the Cadwell residents and Coventry Neighbors, Inc. if the two groups agree about the undesirability of placing any more structures adjacent to the Cadwell and Hampshire residential properties.

Thank you,  
Yoash Wiener

Dear Editor and President of Coventry Neighbors:

As a very close neighbor of the Coventry commercial area, I always try to attend the Coventry Neighbors' meetings to keep up with what is going on.

At the last meeting, it was interesting to have been shown another concept of how development should proceed. The proposal put forward by Coventry Village Development Corp. has a lot of merit. The ideas for the Coventry Cinema were impressive and certainly bold.

I do feel, however, that the proposals should have gone on display to the community at large, including all Coventry Neighbors before the vote of approval. Approval by those who happen to show up at the meetings may not represent endorsement by the entire membership. It would seem to me that informing the members beforehand in the newsletter of the upcoming topics would bring more interested people to the meetings.

If Coventry Neighbors genuinely wishes to regain the support of the people in the area, it is going to have to earn it. A great deal more reaching out to the community is needed.

- Geoffrey Pankhurst

## Theater Open

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inclusive parking spaces. The following letter was sent to Zuchowski March 15.

Dear Mr. Zuchowski:

Coventry Neighbors, Inc. analyses various issues and proposals that arise here. Since 1969, our members have taken positions on these matters attempting to guide and encourage the renaissance of our neighborhood.

For example, members at our March 12 meeting voted unanimously to support your preliminary plans to renovate the theater. This includes plans for exclusive theater parking.

We are thrilled with the prospect of the grand rebirth of this neighborhood institution. Life has not been the same since the day the Coventry Cinema died August 29, 1988.

Good luck! We will look forward to watching your progress toward the expected June 1 opening. Sincerely, Marilyn Pryor, President

### Moving Along

The Casbah has  
moved from 2783  
Euclid Heights Blvd.  
to 1856 Coventry.

Mitchels is moving  
mid-April to 2285 Lee  
Road.

# Increase in Property Values Spark Rebirth of North Coventry

by David O'Konski

The once deteriorating North Coventry area of Cleveland Heights (North of Mayfield Road), jokingly referred to as a prime location to be leveled and developed as a theme park, has shown a respectable increase in property values. This increase is due largely to the improved appearance and conditions of the homes in that area.

A major factor behind the improvements can be attributed to the homeowners taking advantage of the city of Cleveland Heights Exterior Renovation program. Under this program, the city will match up to \$4,000 for exterior improvements after a comprehensive plan is submitted by the homeowner and approved by the Cleveland Heights Planning Department.

According to Jay Gardner, the program coordinator, approximately 40 homes have been completed in the North Coventry area since the program was offered in

1987. There are currently 5 homes now pending to take advantage of the program.

In 1988, the average sale price of multi-family dwellings was \$67,300 with a mean sale price of \$66,000. In 1990, the average sale price was \$71,900 with a mean sale of \$72,000. The last two title transfers in the area were \$80,000 for a two-family on Hillcrest and \$81,900 for another on Avondale. Increases on Hampshire, south of Coventry, are even more dramatic.

The rebirth of this area has attracted not only responsible investors but an increased number of owner occupants as well.

The renovation areas covered are Coventry Area multi-family homes as well as multi-family homes in the Taylor Mayfield Road area. For more explanation about the program, contact Jay Gardner, Cleveland Heights Planning Department, City Hall 291-4878.

## FYI : City Ordinances You Should Know

The following information was obtained from Cleveland Heights Residents' Guide published by the city.

Questions often arise from new residents concerning signs, refuse collection, pets etc. Long-time residents may have these questions too. With this in mind, the following information is offered to answer questions about city ordinances that may affect our daily living.

### *Bicycles and Skateboards*

The city requires licences and registration for all bicycles operated within the city. Cyclists can buy their permits at the Treasury Window on the entry level of City Hall. They need to supply the color, make and model number of the bike. Bikers should, of course, follow all traffic safety rules. Bicycles and skateboards should not be ridden on sidewalks of commercial districts nor in areas which have posted signs prohibiting riding on walkways.

### *Jogging and Walking In The Street*

For safety's sake, where a sidewalk is provided, no pedestrian should walk in the street. If a sidewalk is unavailable, pedestrians should walk on the left side of the road as close to the curb as possible. Joggers also need to remember to run as close to the curb as possible and on the left side only. At night, runners and joggers should wear protective clothing.

Pedestrians also shall not cross the street at any place except a marked crosswalk. At no time should children or adults be playing in the street.

### *Noise*

In the interest of not disturbing the peace, residents should remember not to operate any lawn mower within 300 feet of any dwelling before 7:00am or after 9:00pm. It is also not permitted to make any unreasonably loud noise by voice, music, television etc. in such an intensity as to disturb the neighbors.

## Code Enforcement continued from page 2

through the offices - goes first to Inspection Services and from there to the Municipal Court. Inspection Services knows whether a case is coming up in a week or two before it goes to the court. They can give you information if you can tell them the ADDRESS of the offending property.

One piece of information they can give you is the docket number. That can help you in some circumstances.

If the case has already passed on to the court, Inspection Services may not be able to give you further information. Then your inquiries should go to the Clerk of Courts' office at 291-4904. When you call the Clerk (actually, you will get a deputy clerk) you can refer to the case by the docket number, if you have it. If you don't, you must be able to give the name of the defendant - the owner of the offending property. THE ADDRESS DOESN'T HELP at this point; their files are not set up that way.

Once the case is in court, writing your letter becomes a productive activity. It may happen, however, that you want to do more. Some people think that having observers at the court helps to draw emphasis to the importance of the case.

If you are an observer, remember you are NOT a participant. (Do you really need to be told this? Probably not, but here it is anyway.) Although a court appearance is a public activity, it is NOT a public hearing. If you forget this, you may cause the same kind of damage as when writing to the judge and you may get into trouble personally.

So, now that you understand all that (you did anyway, right?) and you still want to be an observer, you need the trial date, or the next hearing date if there have been one or more continuances. That information comes from the Clerk of Courts.

Each case has a pretrial hearing and an actual trial date. Forget the pretrial, nothing is decided on the merits of the case at this point and your presence will only protect one courtroom chair from a little dust. If you want to be there personally, attend the actual trial. The trial may be held before a referee or before the Municipal Judge. That's the defendants choice, not yours.

### Citizens for Heights School Levy Forum

Wednesday, April 24th  
7:30 PM  
at Heights High School



- "The Cleveland Heights logo should be an *expired parking meter*."
- "Merchants and their own employees could free up 50 nearby spaces if they'd park off in the municipal lots. They remind me of smokers griping that there is as of yet no cure for lung cancer."
- Arabica Sunday morning..... "The next person in line has no idea who the next person in line is." Suggestion: "Get a velvet rope system like the ones used in banks."
- First person: "Centrum on Coventry ... Isn't that the name of a vitamin?"  
Second person: "This street needs a vitamin!"
- Hey, Spike Lee made another movie so I think that the sign should be changed to, "Mo' Better Real Estate."
- "The average parking meter holds more money than the average property owner has invested here in recent years."

## Meeting Notes

### March regular meeting

**C**oventry Village Development Corporation (CVDC) President Charles Owen presented plans for redeveloping the business district. CVDC, as Coventry's economic development organization, has been working with the city, Coventry Neighbors and local merchants to provide seasoned input into the recently completed commercial district comprehensive plan. Members approved the CVDC review process and Phase I of the CVDC plan.

**R**esidents Looking Over Coventry continues its organizational efforts. The purpose of the group is to protect the residential properties and atmosphere from encroachment of the business district. CNI invited Residents Looking Over Coventry to give a presentation at the April meeting.

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c/o Heights Community Congress  
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Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

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**DATED MATERIAL — PLEASE DELIVER BEFORE APRIL 9**

The next regular meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, April 9 at 7:40 p.m. at the Coventry Village Library, Euclid Heights Blvd. & Coventry Rd.

If you join Coventry Neighbors, Inc. you can be sure of having a voice in your neighborhood organization and a way to shape the future of your neighborhood. Membership includes a subscription to the Coventry Village News.

Please indicate the kind of membership you want:

Individual Membership (\$7.50)  Family (\$10.00)  
 Senior Citizen (\$5.00)  Newsletter Subscription only (\$5.00)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

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