ANNUAL CNI ELECTION MEETING

The October 11 meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will resolve the crucial issue of who will lead the organization for the next year. Six offices are involved: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two Trustees. Results of this election will determine the future of CNI, its ability to function and its potential in the future.

CNI has done much in the past year. Besides running the highly successful 1977 Coventry Street Fair, it has published a monthly newsletter for 600 readers, lobbied successfully for legislation at City Hall, worked with City officials to resolve numerous neighborhood problems, and generally served as a social link for many concerned citizens. CNI has had modest goals and has shown itself to be a viable and useful vehicle for community action.

As usual, the annual election meeting will feature a discussion of prospects for further activity by CNI. This meeting is extremely important. I urge those of you who care about the continued existence of CNI to attend. An organization cannot function only upon the good wishes of its friends.

Any Coventry area resident can run for an office. Lack of experience and recent membership in CNI are not disqualifications. Interest, energy, and a minimum amount of time are required.

Please come and give your prospective leadership your support.
- Alan Rapoport, CNI President

The annual election meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will take place on Tuesday, October 11, 1977, at 8:00 p.m., at the Unitarian Society on Lanchashire Road, across from Musicians' Tower.

Keep Informed!

Under the sponsorship of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights PTA Council, Roxboro Junior High School will hold a School Board Candidates Forum on October 11, 1977 (Tuesday) at 7:30 p.m. This is to be the main meeting for these candidates for this area. Everyone is encouraged to attend. For information, please call Kitty Borchert at 932-7139.

Editor's Note: Please note the scheduling conflict between the above meeting and the CNI meeting discussed in the lead article.

Guess What? The City has declared Halloween on Sunday, October 30th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Be prepared!
LETTER TO THE COVENTRY COMMUNITY

Greetings to the Coventry Community! My name is Triss Lassic and I am the new coordinator in the School Community Program. My office is at Roxboro Junior High School and I can be reached at 371-7458 or 371-7238.

This year marks the second year of the School Community Program and our objective continues to be the development of a sense of identification with the schools by members of the community while at the same time making the school system more responsive to the community. The tool for our programming is the cadre which exists in each elementary school district. On each cadre are parents, non-parents, religious leaders, merchants, educators, street club representatives and city government representatives—all of whom also represent many racial and ethnic groups. The cadre's function is to serve as a communications link to the community-at-large and to facilitate rumor control and crisis intervention. Emphasis in our program is placed on the utilization of the schools by the non-school community—i.e., senior citizens, families with pre-schoolers, singles and families without children. Already this year I've talked with many of you about programming that you would like to see in your schools and I am always open to hearing new suggestions and ideas.

The Coventry School gym will be open to the entire adult Coventry Community for unstructured co-ed volleyball on Tuesdays and unstructured co-ed basketball on Thursdays from 7 p.m. till 10 p.m. beginning October 11 and October 13 respectively.

Also being planned by the Coventry Cadre and the Coventry School PTA is a community wide Coventry Village Art Festival on Saturday, November 19, 1977 in the Coventry School. We are seeking independent artists who would like to promote, display, and/or sell their artistic endeavors. We are particularly interested in artists in the Coventry area. If interested, call Bob Ainslie at 321-5322 (after 6:30 p.m. please) for further information.

Watch for many new and interesting programs sponsored by the School Community Program as this school year unfolds.

Community Improvement Awards

The Community Improvement Awards Committee cordially invites you and your family to attend a special event honoring people and organizations who have contributed to the physical improvement of our City. They will take place on:

Sunday Evening, October 16, 1977
7:30 p.m.
Jewish Community Center, 3505 Mayfield Rd.

Evening events include an invitational exhibit by Cleveland Heights photographers in Mandel Hall; performance by the Fairmount Center for Creative and Performing Arts; image of Cleveland Heights slide presentation; slide show of nominations; awards; special Committee awards; greetings and refreshments.

The event is open to the public, without charge, and you are welcome to attend.
FOSTER CHILDREN'S PLIGHT COMPICLATES FAMILY DEFINITION REVIEW

The situation of foster children and of pre-adoptive children conditionally placed in homes has become entwined with the proposed reform of the legal definition of "family" pondered by the Committee of the Whole of Council on September 26. This comes about from the approach taken by the legislation to resolve the "roomer permit" controversy. Presently, every household (if it has the space) may take in two roomers under a permit issued administratively by the Building Department. The demand of the City that apartment room-mates obtain such permits--with attendant registration of names and payment of fees--become a matter of controversy. More roomers are permitted only after a Zoning Board hearing.

The proposed approach eliminates the administrative permit and requires all households wishing to house roomers to appear before the Board; but it expands the definition of the family to include two additional unrelated persons over 21. The last condition catches foster children in a bind. Presently, a family need have willingness, enough space, approval by the County, and the administrative permit to accept up to two foster children. Under the proposed set-up, the intentional foster parents would have to go through a hearing of some stringency. The County already puts them through enough of an investigation that the prospect of further bureaucratic hassle is, in the opinion of the experts who testified September 25, a genuine barrier to recruitment of foster families.

Rationale for the over-21 condition lies in protection of minors and of the public school systems, and is hard to view as outrageously stringent. (Some question about 21 years vs. 18 years could be raised--and was raised by your correspondent--but that would not help the foster children in question.)

Obviously, I'd rather not see further delayed a liberalization I've advocated for three years. No less obviously, given the option of being an apartment room-mate suffering a bureaucratic hassle and being a foster child unable to find placement other than in an institution, I'd pick the former. The conflict exists because of the way the Law Department responded to a request, and not because of the request itself, but one doesn't want to see the response go to naught.

At the hearing, I proposed that the Law Department, having been clever once in pulling room-mates out of the "roomer" category, be clever twice and do the same for foster children and children placed pre-adoptively. (The old and new definitions include adopted children, but pre-adoptees need the ol' permit.) A member of the Law Department mused after the hearing that families with an intent to accept such children might apply for a special review by the City before approaching the County. The legislation goes next to the Planning Commission.

There was, interestingly enough, no uniform "establishment" view of proper composition of families and households. The visible diversity ran from the Mayor, who is uneasy about any expansion of permitted household size, to a member of the Planning Commission who feels on principle that any restrictive family definition is an affront.

We see here an exemplary operation of Murphy's Third Law: There is no problem so big or so complicated that it cannot, upon closer examination, become more so.

- Dave Burwasser
Zipkin of Coventry: A Review

Lewis Zipkin did come to the September meeting of CNI as promised. Opening with a prepared statement, Mr. Zipkin gave a detailed history of his involvement in Coventry Field. He also defended himself against charges that his rents were too high and that his building is mismanaged.

People who came to confront Mr. Zipkin seemed generally more interested in making statements than in asking probing questions. The tone of the meeting was polite, although it was clear that many Coventry residents present at the meeting were fearful of the "progress" typified by new development such as Coventry Field. All questions were answered by Mr. Zipkin, who stayed after an hour and a half formal session for informal conversations.

Mr. Zipkin was quite impressive, and his articulate, intelligent discussion left its impact. "I have only one question," someone said to me after the meeting, "Have I been conned?" Hard to tell, I replied. This meeting could only open lines of communication and start a badly needed dialogue between developers and residents. It could hardly settle in two hours the continuing mystery of Zipkin of Coventry Field.

- Alan Rapoport

NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

The Heights Community Congress First Annual Neighborhoods Conference, "neighbors together," will be held on Sunday, October 9 at Beaumont School from 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. This conference will bring together representatives from all facets of our community.

Workshops will be held on such diverse subjects as commercial revitalization, code enforcement, child care, FHA and VA, the Municipal Court, and the schools.

There is a $1 registration fee ($3 if you can stay for dinner). Child care will be provided free of charge. For more information, contact the Heights Community Congress at 321-6775.

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