

## New association joins dispute over parking

*'Rolden' now part of communities fighting Roland Park Place's plans to raze house for car lot*

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It isn't exactly the birth of a nation, but a development skirmish on the Hampden-Roland Park line has spawned a new association for a little-known neighborhood.

Introducing Rolden, roughly 100 dwelling units in the 4000-4100 blocks of Roland Avenue, near the old Roland Park water tower, Medfield and Hoes Heights.

Businesses along the strip include Roland Park Wines & Liquors, Venus Cleaners & Alterations, Elmhurst Nursery School and Vogue Revisited, a women's consignment shop. Around the corner are, The Rotunda mall and two continuing care retirement communities, Roland Park Place, and Keswick Multi-Care Center. A Safeway shopping center is just up 40th street.

Some people refer to the neighborhood as "Hamrol." Resident Julia Pierson isn't one of them.

"It is *not* Hamrol," Pierson said. "I'm a vegetarian. Who wants to be Hamrol?"

Pierson, best known as former director of the Govans Ecumenical Development Corp., has been leading a fight in her neighborhood to save a vacant house that Roland Park Place wants to raze so it can make room for more parking at the retirement complex.

Officials said they have a shortage of off-street parking for their residents, staff and visitors, and currently rent 40 parking spaces at the Rotunda for staff.

Another 15 employees park along the east side of Elm Avenue during the day.

Roland Park Place originally wanted the city to amend its Planned Unit Development so it could put parking spaces behind an old church at 4001 Roland Ave., and tear down the house at 4021 Roland, next to the nursery school, to add parking there too.

Roland Park Place owns the church and the house, but neither property is included in its current PUD, said Teresa Snyder, president of Roland Park Place.

A community meeting with Roland Park Place officials was held March 3 and residents came out against the plan.

Snyder wrote a letter March 25 to Pierson and Phil Spevak, the president of the Roland Park Civic League, that stated, "We have taken our plans back to the proverbial drawing board and are re-examining our parking options with respect to these two properties."

Snyder's letter detailed a parking problem she maintained is out of control. Even with extra parking on Elm and at the mall, there's sometimes a lack of parking, and staffers are encouraged to ride MTA buses, the letter said.

Roland Park Place even looked into the possibility of having a ZIP car rental center at the retirement community.

But because of community opposition, Roland Park Place now is seeking "a neighborly solution to our current parking constraints," Snyder wrote.

The letter is posted on the league's Web site, [www.rolandpark.org](http://www.rolandpark.org).

In an e-mail to the Messenger on May 14, Snyder wrote, "RPP is still modifying plans based on the input we received at the community meeting we hosted in early March. We will soon be prepared to meet again with the neighbors to show them our latest considerations reflecting the comments made at the first

meeting."

Roland Park Place's frustration over lack of parking is matched by Rolden's frustration over the potential loss of a house that symbolizes the community's reclaimed identity.

"We have an eclectic neighborhood. Taking a tooth out just doesn't work," she said.

Pierson, who lives in a house her family has owned for 30 years, rues the idea that a parking lot might be built on her street, possibly affecting property values.

However the dispute is resolved, the lasting legacy may be the new association.

Pierson said her husband, Robert, an attorney, has filed "articles of revival" with the state Department of Assessments and Taxation to re-establish Rolden, an association that has been inactive for many years.

The new association has a charter, a land-use committee and temporary officers, including Anne-Elizabeth Murdy as president, Julia Pearson as vice president, Roz McCarthy as treasurer and Robert Pierson as secretary.

Julia Pierson admits they formed an association at least partly to give the community clout in its negotiations with Roland Park Place.

But she isn't in a rush to call an association meeting.

"Oh, we don't have one scheduled, but we'll probably do one in June. We're going to have real (board) elections," she said.

They might also change the name of the association.

"We don't really like Rolden, either," she said.

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