

## City to help Roland Park draft master plan

*Community to hold charette Nov. 21*

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**(Enlarge)** Mary Page Michel, a neighbor of the Baltimore Country Club property, stands on the green space in 2008 where the Keswick Multi-Care Center wanted to build a 343-bed retirement community. Michel will be involved in helping to draft a master plan for Roland Park. (File photo)

While Baltimore City prepares for comprehensive rezoning for the first time in three decades, Roland Park is seizing a rare opportunity to plan for its own future.

Hoping to gain more control over traffic and development, the neighborhood hopes to create its own city-backed master plan.

"We have a unique opportunity this year to create a master plan," said Phil Spevak, president of the Roland Park Civic League, at the league's board meeting Nov. 5. "It's unique, because the city is changing the zoning anyway."

All residents of Roland Park and surrounding communities as well as the business and religious communities are invited to Roland Park Elementary/Middle School on Saturday, Nov. 21, from 9:15 a.m. to noon, for the first of three charettes, or brainstorming

sessions, Spevak said.

The second session is planned for Friday, Jan. 8, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the school. The third has not been scheduled.

In a letter of invitation to the community Nov. 9, Spevak said the goal is "to identify current and future needs and solutions to guide Roland Park into the next several generations in a manner mindful of the qualities we wish to preserve and even strengthen in our community."

Drafting a master plan has widespread city support. Both City Council members who represent the area, Mary Pat Clarke and Sharon Greene Middleton, are on board, as are Director of Planning Thomas Stosur and Seema Iyer, a Roland Park resident and chief of the city's Division of Research and Strategic Planning, Spevak said. The city is providing in-kind services such as mapping and manpower, including planning department assistance, he said.

Roland Park resident and town planner Michael Medick, of Medick Architects, in Baltimore, will lead the charettes.

Also involved are people who worked on the previous try at a master plan, including Jaqueline Carrera, president and chief executive officer of the Parks and People Foundation, and developer David Tufaro, who led the 1992 effort with Stosur. That plan never came to fruition, possibly because it lacked city government, "connections," Spevak said.

He also said he has commitments from two leading business owners in the area, Nancy Cohen, owner of the Eddie's of Roland Park markets, and Eddie Dopkin, who owns Alonso's and Loco Hambre, among other restaurants.

Perhaps most importantly, the master plan effort has a \$25,000 budget for planning. The civic league, Roland Park Roads and Maintenance, and the Roland Park Foundation, the community's fundraising arm,

each will pay a third.

Having a master plan with city teeth is a top 2010 priority for the league, which guards Roland Park's limited green space closely. The league last year staved off a proposal by the Keswick Multi-Care Center to build a retirement community on 17 acres of Baltimore Country Club land.

Other issues for the league include traffic congestion on Roland Avenue on school days, parking problems in the area, historic preservation and transportation services.

The league hopes to use changes in city zoning as a way to benefit Roland Park.

But league member Michael Braverman, the city's deputy housing commissioner, said the city and the league must stick with the master plan, and make clear "what it is we want to accomplish," or else it will become just another document gathering dust.

"Planners like to have them and they sit on shelves," he said.

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