



Just say no to development of our precious green space

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Hudson's Corner

The community has spoken, and not just the Roland Park community. At the special July 1 Roland Park Civic League meeting concerning the proposed development of 17 acres at the Baltimore Country Club, representatives from North Roland Park, Cross Keys, Tuscany-Canterbury, Evergreen and Keswick (a.k.a. Alonsoville) stood in line to speak and join an overwhelming majority of more than 400 attendees in a chorus of 'No!' to the possible loss of green space.

The land is important not only to residents closest to the site, and to all Roland Parkers who cherish open space, but also to surrounding city neighborhoods and a fragile environment near the Jones Falls.

If this land is not preserved, the Jones Falls and the Chesapeake Bay will suffer further deterioration. If this land is not preserved, air pollution, noise level and urbanization of several residential neighborhoods will dramatically increase. With miles of crumbling streets, abandoned houses and unused buildings, the city should create more green space and not allow paving over of remaining pristine areas in residential communities.

Forget that Roland Park is an Olmsted community. Forget that plats 2 and 3 and the club were simultaneously designed and built around each other, after Edward Bouton, the general manager of the Roland Park Company, transformed the 1896 Roland Park Golf Club into the Baltimore Country Club in 1898.

Forget all of that, and what remains is green space treasured by surrounding communities and city residents. The benefit of being in nature has been written about for centuries, from the time Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. set foot in Baltimore to our era of global warming. Consider how many people garden, walk or jog in Roland Park and how many golfers throng to greens.

As the Elkridge Club golf course is an environmental buffer for Bellona-Gittings, The Orchards and Lake Avenue, so too is land at Baltimore Country Club. Green space in a city is a precious commodity. Once paved, it rarely returns.

On July 1, the greater community said, 'No! No!' to losing green space. 'No!' to the ignoring of community leaders, who three times submitted written proposals to buy the land. 'No!' to ignoring city neighborhoods.

I truly believe that Baltimore Country Club members value green space. Many live, if not in Roland Park, in green areas of the city and county. These members may well be faced with club assessments, but the extended Roland Park community can raise funds to meet their price. May the BCC membership now vote in a way compatible to what they would want in their own neighborhoods. May they too say, 'No!' to the paving over of green hillsides.

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