

## Hudson's Corner: Roland Parkers should show their stewardship of green space

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Posted 8/06/08

Hudson's Corner

Signs in Roland Park say, "Keep the Park in Roland Park." As Roland Parkers, joined by neighborhood organizations and residents of all North Baltimore communities, continue an aggressive campaign to preserve 17 acres of undeveloped land at the Baltimore Country Club, it is important to review what makes this area park-like.

Because of the ingenious Olmsted design, green islands and medians thread through the community, where houses and roads follow the natural topography of the land and where parks, like ones on Merryman Court and behind Edgevale Road, create common greens. The required setback of residential properties and business blocks ensures a green vista down Roland Park streets.

Where trolley tracks were initially screened by privet hedge, the Roland Park Community Foundation and Baltimore City two decades ago planted Japanese Zelkovas to grace the central boulevard, Roland Avenue.

Thanks to a 21st century visionary, Roland Parker Michael Beer, his dedicated band of volunteers, the involvement of Sandy Sparks and the Greater Homewood Association, and now the Jones Falls Watershed Association and Baltimore City, the Stony Run park is in better shape than ever. Trees and native plants are constantly planted. The stream bed has been rebuilt to prevent erosion. Mulched paths invite walkers, joggers and bird watchers from all over the city to enjoy nature in this area.

With all of this existing green space, a few more efforts, however, might be made immediately to demonstrate that neighborhood residents are serious stewards of the land.

First, by paying full service fees to the Roland Park Roads and Maintenance Corporation, which maintains community paths, islands and medians, Roland Parkers could instantly show serious interest. Because of lack of funds, Roads and Maintenance has had to stop tending two of the most visible greenways: Cold Spring Lane and Roland Avenue.

The city is mowing, but weeds are taking over the rose bushes planted on Cold Spring at Roland. The ash trees need pruning. A few need replacing. And why can't water bags be installed on new street trees, as they are in Guilford? The University Parkway greenway needs vine removal and weeding too.

The footpaths, a community hallmark, need maintenance. Encroaching bushes and vines should be clipped. A brigade of Roland Park volunteers might do the trick when the weather cools.

While the Roland Avenue Zelkovas look terrific, the narrow medians in the middle of Roland at Cold Spring Lane look horrendous. The city does not allow trees in these narrow strips, yet the grass has worn away. Bricks would greatly improve the appearance of this gateway to Roland Park, Roland Springs, Keswick, Evergreen and Hoes Heights.

Property owners can request the planting of free trees on grass medians in front of their houses. By going to the Roads and Maintenance section of [www.rolandpark.org](http://www.rolandpark.org), homeowners can find a form for this citywide program. It is up to property owners to water these trees.

A few simple actions would quickly improve the current landscape and reiterate just what serious stewards of green space Roland Parkers are.

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