



November 30, 2008

To my fellow Roland Park residents:

A letter from Mayor Dixon arrived yesterday announcing her opposition to the Keswick Planned Unit Development. It is posted on our community web site (www.rolandpark.org)

The Mayor wrote "...I am not willing to introduce, nor would I support, any legislation at this point, including a Planned Unit Development, that would allow the Keswick project in its current form to move forward." This is good news.

Unfortunately, the Mayor also proposes "...more constructive discussion between the developers and the community to determine whether compromise is possible." She adds, "I'd like to see what progress can be made by March 15, 2009."

The process has gone on for five months and we see little value to further discussion given the overwhelming community opposition and the extensive review process that has already occurred. Moreover, I have explained to the Mayor that continuing this process becomes more and more challenging for our community because it requires additional hours of volunteer effort to stop an unwanted proposal when we wish to redirect this energy to buying the land.

The Civic League will respect the Mayor's request and will consider a revised proposal if one is presented. However, a compromise allowing the development to go forward on the Baltimore Country Club land is unlikely given the fundamental disagreements.

It also sends an ominous message for Baltimore that a community like Roland Park, fortunate to have so many resources, has not yet convinced our Mayor to completely support our efforts to stop the Planned Unit Development and to buy the land for community access.

I remain optimistic that we will achieve our goals as long as we, the community, remain engaged. Now is the time to amplify our message and work to broaden our support throughout Baltimore.

There are several elements to our plan and this is what I ask for everyone to do:

1. Write to Mayor Dixon and Deputy Mayor Andy Frank (even if you have written before). Please consider sending your family holiday greeting card along with a personal message asking for more definitive support in opposing the Keswick PUD and in our efforts to buy the land. Addresses for the Mayor and other representatives can be found at <http://www.rolandpark.org/RPReps.html>
2. Thank those elected officials who support our position: Council President Stephanie Rawlings Blake and Council members Sharon Green Middleton, Mary Pat Clarke, James Kraft, Bill Henry, Rikki Spector, Belinda Conway, Edward Reisinger, and Jack Young.
3. Get your signs back up. Try to use what you have or make your own, or write to signs@rolandpark.org if you need new signs.
4. Volunteer to participate in our neighborhood to neighborhood outreach efforts. As part of this, we will visit every community organization in Baltimore. Volunteer at volunteer@rolandpark.org.
5. Attend the Holiday Open House at the Roland Park Fire House on Saturday, December 13 from 2-4 PM. More information to come.
6. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements about community fund raising events to raise money to buy the land.

I also want to let you know that the Civic League will be sponsoring an informational session concerning the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP). A number of residents have asked the Civic League to explore the pros and cons of Roland Park requesting CHAP status. The CHAP mission is to enhance and promote the culture and economy of Baltimore through the preservation of buildings, structures, sites and neighborhoods that have aesthetic, historic and architectural value. The informational session will occur this Thursday, December 4, from 7:15-8:15 PM at the regular monthly meeting of the Civic League at the Roland Park Presbyterian Church. Please consider attending to learn more.

I hope everyone had a happy and peaceful Thanksgiving.

Philip Spevak

President, Roland Park Civic League