



Mr. John L Daue  
President, Baltimore Country Club  
4712 Club Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21210

December 26, 2008

Dear Mr. Daue:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet on December 10 and for your letter of December 12. I believe these exchanges help each side to better understand our respective positions. At the meeting, we once again expressed the community's long-term interest in acquiring the same BCC property that the Club has entered into a contract to sell to Keswick, an interest which goes back over a decade, long before the Keswick proposal was presented.

I wish every resident of Roland Park and every member of the Baltimore Country Club could have observed our meeting on December 10. Unfortunately, I believe many could interpret your words and subsequent actions as an attempt to intimidate the community. In announcing your support for the Keswick proposal, you noted that if there were continued opposition by the community, you would "have to do things that look like retaliation." You made no mention that within hours of our meeting, you would demolish the Club's large and historic tennis clubhouse with a wrecking crane. This clubhouse was part of the rich history of the Club's leadership in tennis and golf dating back to over 100 years ago. There was no compelling need to take such drastic action at this time. We leave it to your neighbors in Roland Park and friends of preservation in the Baltimore area to draw their own conclusions about the action you took.

While we may disagree regarding the Keswick proposal, we should work to understand the basis of that disagreement in order to work towards resolution. Contrary to the claim in your letter, the community has not refused to negotiate. What we said to you at the meeting and what we have said consistently in public is that given the issues at the core of the community's overwhelming opposition to the Keswick plan – changing the R-1 single-family zoning to allow structures, uses and density not allowed under the R-1 zoning and its impact on the character of the neighborhood - it would be difficult to imagine a revised Keswick proposal that would be

acceptable to the community. And despite the community's strong feelings, Keswick has not come forward over the last 6 months with a revised proposal to be considered by the Civic League. We would submit any proposal to the standard review process of the Civic League.

The record is clear about our efforts to engage Keswick and the Club in a dialogue. Representatives of the community have met with the Club or Keswick representatives at least seven times since Keswick announced its proposal in June of this year, and there have been a number of efforts by representatives of the community to meet with club leadership, only to have those efforts denied. We have had two large public meetings. In September and October, we held a dozen roundtable discussions at neighborhood homes involving over 250 residents in which the Keswick's proposal was presented, the zoning issues were discussed, and potential implications of the project for the neighborhood were described and discussed. This has not been the case of a few leaders of the community asserting their own positions. It has been a democratic process in which the leaders have heard the overwhelming sentiment expressed by individual residents of our community. The turnout at the public meetings and the roundtable forums, the number of people writing letters to our elected representatives and the hundreds of people signing petitions, constitute a grass roots expression of the desire to preserve the unique character of Roland Park that has made it special for generations that preceded us and will do so for generations that will follow us.

Our opposition to the proposed planned unit development by Keswick remains based strictly on our desire to preserve the fabric of Roland Park, and we stand behind the support provided by current R1 zoning. I believe you confuse our informed opposition with what you describe as unwillingness to engage in meaningful dialogue.

You have cited what you believe to be benefits to the community and the City. We must dispute some of your claims and note the omission of other important facts in your letter.

- You state that the project will not involve any subsidies from Baltimore City. That is untrue. Keswick proposes that the project be a non-profit operation which would not be subject to the normal real estate taxes to which a for-profit project would be subject. In lieu of the full taxes which could amount to several million dollars on a \$200 million project, Keswick proposes to pay in lieu of taxes the amount of \$500,000. If that is not a subsidy, what is it? In addition, Keswick is proposing that the project be financed with tax-exempt bonds which means that the taxpayers of the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore could be subsidizing the project with these special tax-exempt rates.
- You note that the financial condition of the Club is strong and in our meeting noted that "we can sit and wait and sell it in three or four years if we want."
- To the extent your estimate of the benefits is correct, the benefits largely remain if the project were sited elsewhere in Baltimore City.

- You have accounted for neither the initial nor the ongoing costs of the development for the City.
- You have ignored considerable negative externalities of your proposed development, so significant that some potential home buyers are not choosing to buy homes in the immediate neighborhood.
- You do not state the fact that the facility will be offered to a relatively elite group of residents with an average admission charge of \$650,000, putting it out of price range for the overwhelming percentage of residents of Baltimore City.
- You do not point out that Roland Park is already home to the only continuing care retirement community in the city of Baltimore. When you say that with the Keswick proposal there is an opportunity to provide a needed “first class” continuing care facility, one would infer you believe that Roland Park Place is not such a facility.
- You do not state that the Club has already reaped the financial benefits of selling off over 100-acres of what was the original Baltimore Country Club golf course community in the 1960’s.
- You do not mention that the Baltimore Country Club, although a private club, was an integral part of development of Roland Park in the 1890’s and the founders’ concept of open space, both public and private.
- You do not mention that the Country Club property was originally under Roland Park covenants that prohibited and placed severe restrictions on development and that this was followed by the R-1 single family zoning which prohibits the development proposed by Keswick.
- You failed to mention that out of more than 2,000 Club members, fewer than 300 live in Baltimore City and only 50 live in Roland Park. The Club’s primary campus is located at Five Farms in Baltimore County with a swimming pool, two golf courses, tennis courts and a clubhouse facility, so although your Roland Park clubhouse may be an important part of your overall facilities, the vast majority of your members have no contact with the Club property in Roland Park.

Your economic argument has failed to convince many.

We have heard you say that Club goals are to sell what you term “surplus land”, to use the proceeds to retain and enhance the Roland Park clubhouse so that it remains your flagship facility and in so doing, preserve the beautiful sightlines. What you term “surplus land” is part of the original Olmsted plan for Roland Park. While we respect its current private ownership, we wish you could appreciate the historic significance of this land and its value to our community.

Should the Keswick proposal not go forward, the community remains interested in purchasing the property at the fair market value that the property represents under its current R-1 zoning. And despite the expressed doubts of some members of the Club that the community could not raise the required dollars, the Club has never sought to substantiate these doubts. Given the strong interest of the community in acquiring the property, individual members of the community have expressed their willingness to put up substantial dollars. The past track record of the community in raising large sums, including the very successful fundraising effort by the community for the renovation and expansion of the Roland Park Public Library which reopened early this year and our current successful effort to renovate our fire house, all attest to our ability to purchase the property. We have the capacity to achieve our goals. Our elected representatives stand beside us in our position.

In your letter of December 12 you, however, said that "...based on a number of critical considerations and factors, the Club is not willing to negotiate or otherwise consider the sale of its surplus property [sic] to either the Roland Park Civic League or the Roland Park Foundation." What are these critical considerations and factors? If we knew, I believe we could adequately respond given the goals you have already articulated.

Leadership demands that we reflect our constituents' beliefs. I challenge you to sponsor an open meeting with Club members where we might explain the community desire to purchase the property and retain its full heritage. The Civic League has allowed you and Ms. Bowerman to speak to and write directly to the community, but you have never extended the same courtesy to me and other leaders of Roland Park.

John, we live across the street from the club, yet we unfortunately still seem to be miles apart in our discourse. I find this tragic and in no one's interests. I offer to continue to work with you and Club leadership to change this. The Club was originally established by the Roland Park Corporation, and you still include our community name on your letterhead. I hope you will view the enclosed DVD and imagine if you lived in our neighborhood and raised your children here. What position might you take? I believe then you will understand the basis of our strong opposition to the Keswick proposal and our wish to buy the land to use in a manner that simultaneously reflects the interests of the Club and enhances the character of our community.

Best wishes to you this holiday season.

Sincerely,



Philip Spevak  
President, Roland Park Civic League

Enclosure: DVD

Cc: Honorable Mayor Sheila Dixon  
Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton  
Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke  
Councilman James B. Kraft  
Councilman Nicholas D'Adamo, Jr.  
Councilman Robert Curran  
Councilman Bill Henry  
Councilwoman Rochelle "Rikki" Spector  
Councilwoman Belinda Conway  
Councilwoman Helen Horton  
Councilwoman Agnes Welch  
Councilman Edward Reisinger  
Councilman William H. Cole, IV  
Councilman Bernard "Jack" Young  
Councilman Warren Branch  
Planning Commission Chairman Wilbur Cunningham  
Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg  
Delegate Nathaniel T. Oakes  
Delegate Jill P. Carter  
Delegate Frank M. Conaway, Jr.  
Delegate Barbara A. Robinson  
Delegate Shawn Z. Tarrant  
Senator Lisa A. Gladden  
Senator Catherine E. Pugh