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Big senior center remains a bad fit

August 16, 2008

Keswick Multi-Care Center CEO Libby Bowerman makes several claims in her recent letter regarding her organization's desire to build a large continuing care retirement community on 17 acres of open space currently owned by the Baltimore Country Club in [Roland Park](#) ("Center sustains open space," letters, Aug. 9).

Most of the community opposes this proposal, as does the Roland Park Civic League.

Claim: The proposal will preserve green space.

Fact: Only 6 of the 17 acres Keswick wants to buy would be left undisturbed, according to its plans.

The nine buildings Keswick proposes to build, along with the other areas it intends to pave, would cover a footprint of more than 200,000 square feet.

The scale is massive. The footprint of the Keswick development would be approximately twice that of the buildings at the Rotunda Shopping Center.

Claim: Keswick does not need a zoning change to build this project, just a planned unit development ordinance.

Fact: Keswick's intended use is not allowed under current zoning. It must seek a PUD to allow the additional uses it proposes, and this is effectively a rezoning. A PUD is such a drastic change in land-use law that it must be implemented through an ordinance passed by the City Council and signed by the mayor.

Claim: Keswick has been a good neighbor to Roland Park.

Fact: Most Roland Parkers agree, and this is all the more reason we are surprised by the terrible mistake Keswick has made.

Without any community input, a development completely out of character with our neighborhood has been proposed.

We have suggested alternative locations to Keswick that would allow it to stay in Baltimore, alternatives that would enhance and not destroy the alternative site.

A compromise that would be better for all parties than the current proposal is still achievable.

It would involve the community purchasing the land from the BCC and Keswick finding an alternative location for its center.

Philip J. Spevak

Baltimore

The writer is president of the Roland Park Civic League.

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