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Open space fight roils Roland Park

July 9, 2008

The editorial "Talk it over" (July 6) trivializes the loss of irreplaceable green space by treating it as a silly conflict between a neighborhood and the Baltimore Country Club and the Keswick Multi-Care Center.

However, the proposed expansion of Keswick into Roland Park would eliminate one of the last large pieces of unspoiled ground on the north side of the city. This project is grotesquely out of proportion to the space involved and would create massive traffic problems and infrastructure burdens.

The Sun urges that the parties involved "confer." But this deal was secretly concocted between BCC and Keswick with no community involvement. The plans for the development have still not been made public. Confer?

The editorial fails to note that the community has made repeated offers to purchase the land at fair market value over more than a decade.

The destruction of this land would change the fabric of the neighborhood forever.

The Sun argues that Baltimore needs more senior housing, but Roland Park already has ample facilities for the elderly.

This issue is not about old folks. It is about a commercial venture and the loss of green space.

Why doesn't Keswick explore options elsewhere in the city where there is demonstrated need and where such development might help revitalize a community?

Christopher Corbett

Baltimore I was most disappointed by the editorial backing compromise on the impending sale of Baltimore Country Club green space for development by the Keswick Multi-Care Center.

The Sun's view notwithstanding, this is about far more than preserving a sledding hill for privileged Roland Park children.

There is very little green space left in Baltimore, and what there is must be preserved.

Roland Park - the nation's first planned garden suburb - is one of Maryland's gems. Although its edges have, over the past few decades, been eroded by commercial and high-density development, much of which has been poorly done, the

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If the Country Club property is "in the heart" of Douglas Munro's Roland Park he should get out more. Someone tell him about Eddie's. "Head east young man."

Submitted by RP resident
9:53 AM EDT, Jul 9, 2008

Keswick "should explore options elsewhere" -- what unctuousness. No wonder people think RParkers are self-important jerks.

Submitted by RP resident
9:42 AM EDT, Jul 9, 2008

I have always felt that it was a mistake to place the suburban Roland Park right where it would have made more sense to continue the urban fabric of Hampden/Charles Village north toward Towson. I'm all for anything that makes Roland Park a little more city and a little less 'burb.

Submitted by westside
8:46 AM EDT, Jul 9, 2008

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Talk about it: Proposed Keswick expansion in Roland Park

BCC-Keswick deal would be in a league of its own.

The BCC land is not perimeter land; it juts right into the heart of Roland Park. Whatever its eventual size, the Keswick development would not be out of sight and could never be out of mind.

Simply having a smaller development on the land would be about as acceptable as having a small mall built over [Colonial Williamsburg](#) instead of a big mall.

Douglas Munro

Baltimore

The writer is Web site editor for the Roland Park Civic League.

While *The Sun* is entitled to its opinion, the editorial "Talk it over" appears to be based on some mistaken assumptions about the issue.

To quote the editorial: "If the sale goes through, the property would have to be rezoned and the battle would shift."

In fact, the sale will not go through

unless the property is rezoned.

Here's another quote from the editorial: "It appears neither side has found an effective way of talking to the other. ... Both have missed opportunities to avoid a confrontation."

In fact, the Roland Park Civic League has desperately tried to engage the Baltimore Country Club in talks on this land for more than a decade, including several outright offers of purchase.

The country club in recent weeks has refused repeated requests from the community for details about the Keswick Multi-Care Center's plans. It has blocked even the Roland Park Civic League's attempts to address club members.

I understand the desire to be balanced in an editorial. But painting the Roland Park community as equally obdurate in this matter is irresponsible.

Peter Grier

Baltimore The Keswick Multi-Care Center recently announced its interest in purchasing a parcel of land from the Baltimore Country Club to continue its mission of providing the highest level of senior care in Baltimore. News of this plan to build a continuing care retirement community on Falls Road has led to concern and intense, vocal protest.

At this early stage, the plans are, of necessity, conceptual, although Keswick is trying to preserve the character of the Roland Park neighborhood and a significant amount of green space.

Until the BCC membership votes to approve the sale of the land, unfortunately Keswick is not in a position to initiate the appropriate dialogue with the community.

But this much I can say on its behalf: We cherish our reputation as a top-quality provider of services to seniors. This reputation has been earned through consistent sensitivity to residents, staff, constituents and community.

Should the sale be approved, Keswick looks forward to actively engaging in an open and constructive dialogue with all relevant parties, including the residents of Roland Park.

We very much want to continue the good-neighbor policies we have always practiced.

Dorothy Boyce

Baltimore

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The writer is president of the board of the Keswick Multi-Care Center.

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