

Roland Park E-letter

Web Editor's E-letter
March 8, 2009

1. Keswick Revised Plans.

Three months in the making. If you have not seen them yet, Keswick's revised development plans are here: <http://rolandpark.org/KMCCRevisedPlans.html>. The most visually apparent difference between the new plans and the old is the deletion of four relatively small stand-alone buildings along the Hillside Road. Other than that, from the plans at least, the would-be continuing-care facility looks similar.

2. Letters to Mayor.

Roland Park Civic League President Phil Spevak's neighborhood letter last week prompted a flood of letters to the mayor, as bewildered and furious Roland Parkers dismissed Keswick's revision as effrontery and implored the mayor to hold off on making a decision about the planned unit development (PUD) needed by BCC/Keswick. The mayor had originally given the parties until March 15 to discuss matters further, but Keswick produced no revised plan to discuss until toward the end of February. A selection of e-mails sent to the mayor may be found here (scroll to the bottom): <http://rolandpark.org/BCCLettersOfficials.html>.

If you yourself wish to write to the mayor, her e-mail address is mayor@baltimorecity.gov.

3. City Council and State Representatives Remain in Strong Support of RP.

On the bright side, 6th District Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton continues to strongly support Roland Park by refusing to present the PUD required by Keswick to move forward. On March 4 Councilperson Middleton wrote to Phil Spevak:

“Good morning, Phil:

“Thank you for your update on the ‘progress’ of the Keswick proposal.

“Yes, as your proud Council representative, my colleagues and I continue to support the Roland Park Civic League and its community on this important issue.

“Respectfully, Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton.”

In discussion, Councilwoman Middleton emphasized the continued support of her position by the City Council and its president.

Our state representatives also remain with the community by putting forward three bills relevant to this issue, one of which would make Program Open Space dollars available to an organization like the Civic League. (For details, see <http://rolandpark.org/documents/MessengerArticle021809.pdf>.)

Let these elected officials know how much we respect their leadership and appreciate their support. Their e-mail addresses are at <http://rolandpark.org/RPReps.html>.

4. Roland Park History and Ecology Lectures.

Roland Park is more than just a nice place to live — much, much more. Since the BCC/Keswick announcement in June 2008, Roland Parkers have shown their capacity to unite and work together to accomplish our mutual goals. Our community presents an example to other Baltimore neighborhoods facing similar land-use struggles.

A fascinating series of lectures has been organized, with a view toward familiarizing us further with the history and ecology of our home in 21210. The series will tap into our community's civic mindedness. It will also inform Roland Parkers on the decisions we need to make in the coming months and years as we move to preserve the remaining BCC land. Further, the series will identify opportunities for neighborhoods to work together to make Baltimore a greener, cleaner and more sustainable city.

- Wednesday, March 11th, **Urban Ecology and the Baltimore Green Map.** (That's this coming Wednesday, folks.) A central theme will be the ecological importance of green space to the city and to the Chesapeake Bay. Panelists: Steward Pickett, Grace Bush, Jackie Carrera and Janet Felston. Place: Roland Park Presbyterian Church, 4801 Roland Ave. Time: 7-9 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 29th, **Roland Park and the Olmsted Legacy.** In the late 19th century, Roland Park formed part of a vision of America championed by Frederick Law Olmsted and other pioneer urban landscapers and planners. That vision recognized the importance of green space and park networks in making burgeoning cities livable. Those features are evident in Roland Park, one of the first planned urban communities in the U.S. Participants will learn about Roland Park's origins and the ongoing work of the Olmsted Parks Conservancy. Panelists: Jean Mellot and Jerry Baum. Place: Roland Park Women's Club, 4500 Roland Ave. Time: 7-9 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 13th, **Green Space Policy Options and One Park.** Baltimore is endowed with several Olmsted-designed parks and green spaces. However, crucial greenways to connect these jewels, as Olmsted envisioned, are missing. This lecture will present an overview of the One Park concept and show how implementing it would affect Baltimore's quality of life for generations to come. Participants will discuss case studies from other communities that have preserved green space. Lecturers: Steve Zeiger, Peter Harnick and Tom Stosur (invited). Place: North Baltimore Mennonite Church, 4615 Roland Ave. Time: 7-9 p.m.

All lectures will be from 7 to 9 p.m. and will be free to the public. Full details here:
<http://rolandpark.org/documents/RPLectures2009.pdf>.

The series is not related to, but is on a similar theme as, the "Frederick Law Olmsted: His Legend and His Legacy" pair of lectures being held at the Roland Park Country School, April 22 and 25. (For details, see the RP community calendar for the pertinent dates, http://rolandpark.org/cgi/Calendar/RP/long_calendar.cgi.)

Personally, I generally try to stay neutral in these e-letters but, in this case, I'll make an exception. This series promises to be one of the most informative things to happen to RP in years. I urge all residents of greater RP to attend.

5. Firehouse Fund Raiser.

The chili-cookoff firehouse fund raiser, held Feb. 28 in the hall at St. David's, was a standing-room-only success. The event collected \$1,261 in the donation boots and \$2,129 at the door.

Thanks are due in a big way to organizers Kate Culotta and Martha Marani. Great stuff, ladies!

6. Keswick Road Repaving.

I recently received notice that Keswick Road from Cold Spring Lane to Wyndhurst Avenue is to be repaved, starting March 11. The work will take some four months, all told. Parking restrictions will be posted and enforced, with towing a distinct possibility. You have been warned. Details are here: <http://rolandpark.org/documents/KeswickRepaving.pdf>.

7. Swimming Pool.

Summer 2009 membership notices were recently sent out by the Roland Park Swimming Pool. Fees have not gone up and the pool really is exceptional value. It is, besides, greater Roland Park's pool; not anyone else's, but our pool. Opening will be Memorial Day weekend, May 23-25. Please refer to the pool web page at www.rolandpark.org/rppool.html for a updated schedules of events.

Best regards,

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