

ROXBOROUGH FORUM

THE COMMUNITY VOICE

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Welcome again to the Roxborough Forum.

The Roxborough Forum is independent from the Roxborough Park Foundation and its Board of Directors. Opinions presented in the Forum are entirely those of the submitting members and the editor.

The Forum is here for you and is your voice if you choose to use it in the Roxborough community.

The Forum is a media in which you may ask questions, voice opinions, or make suggestions on important community issues. The Forum will come out about every other week. If you address a question to the editor we will obtain the answer as quickly as possible and send it back to you via email. Then your question and answer will also appear in the Forum's next edition along with the suggestions and comments of other members of the community.

We realize that in our busy lives many interested members of the community may not be able to attend board of director meetings. The Forum is here so that you may, at your convenience, voice your questions, comments, and suggestions. We promise that you will be heard and your questions will be answered.

We say hello to six new subscribers to the Forum this week. Welcome aboard.

If you wish to be added to the mailing list to receive future editions of the Forum send an e-mail to roxboroughforum@earthlink.net <<mailto:roxboroughforum@earthlink.net>>

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We have some answers to questions previously submitted:

(Q): A member raised the question about Foundation funds being expended for a marketing campaign to gain votes for the office building. The question is: Shouldn't the Foundation, which represents the entire community, remain neutral? If there is a group that wishes to gain votes for the office building shouldn't they spend their own funds on a marketing strategy?

(A): The answer is no. The Board and the Foundation are committed to serving the community. For more than ten years a large group of community members have expressed the need for an office building/community center. The Board and the Foundation are addressing that need by communicating the issues to the community and putting this project to a vote.

(Q): Some members have expressed concerns about the ongoing costs of running and maintaining a new office building. Apparently no one has performed a cost comparison of owning versus leasing. The question is: Could someone do a cost comparison and present it to the community?

(A): This has been done and was presented at the Board meeting on Tuesday, July 25, 2006. The short version is that the cost to lease vs. the cost to maintain a community owned building is just about the same. It is interesting to note that while the cost to lease and the maintenance costs of the proposed building are about the same the square footage of the proposed office building is three times that of the space we are presently leasing.

(Q): Questions have been raised regarding the estimated cost of the infrastructure--parking lot grading and paving, external lighting, landscaping, sprinkler system, security system, utility hookups, engineering, site development, furnishings, architect fees, etc. Some members feel that the low infrastructure number is too low.

(A): The Building Committee is headed by an architect and a builder. These folks have a handle on costs. If they missed the number it isn't by much. The only real concern is in the recent escalating costs of some items such as asphalt which is oil based.

(Q): A few residents concerned about the lack of fire mitigation in the community have suggested a partnership between the Foundation and the residents. The residents would thin out undergrowth from their properties and put the ensuing slash at the edge of their property and accessible for pickup by a company hired by the Foundation. Two or three special weeks could be designated for pickup. Is there any serious thought being given to this idea?

(A): This idea has surfaced before and may receive future consideration by the Foundation. As to the lack of fire mitigation effort in the community--that is not the case. There is an active Fire Mitigation Committee in Roxborough Park. The Foundation, on the recommendation of the committee, has secured the services of a professional forester, Keith Worley, to study our fire mitigation needs. Mr. Worley will present a rough draft of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in August. In addition, the residents of Sumac Run, at their own expense and with Mr. Worley's direction, are completing a thinning project in their block which may

become the overall guide for thinning other heavily forested sections of our community.

AND NOW WE MOVE ON TO COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY RESIDENTS SINCE THE LAST FORUM:

SUBMITTED BY R: Continuous commentary (pro/con) on our Community Center building are getting a tad tedious. How's about this for something new? I've had a couple of thoughts for improving (my) "life" within Roxborough Park. Perhaps you will recall that I've brought up each of these via e-mail to the GM & Trustees in the past.

#1) Many Roxborough Park residents have difficulty with cell phone reception. This is particularly true for those home sites close to or deep within the rocks. I, for one, in order to minimize the possibility of a dropped call, need to stand outside with one foot on a metal railing and a 3-iron raised over my head. Certainly a single inquiry from our Trustees/GM addressed to all of the local cell service providers would inspire at least one of these providers to install a repeater somewhere in our neighborhood. Perhaps getting permission from the owner of the water tank at the south end?

#2) I would presume that the number of residents without a home computer are few & far between, and broadband services are very expensive. I have Comcast Broadband (\$56/month). Could the Trustees/GM inquire about the possibility & costs of providing wireless broadband service within our community?

FORUM RESPONSE: Thank you R. These are good questions. Perhaps we can get a response from the Foundation on your questions and print the answers in the next Forum.

SUBMITTED BY B: The recent forum email prompts me to throw in my \$.02 on a couple of items. Below are my comments:

In the most recent forum, a resident bemoans the "lack of security" in

the community. Roxborough Park has one of the lowest crime rates in the metro area. Security is not an urgent need. Besides, we didn't move here with the expectation that those who come to visit our home would be subjected to the "interrogations" that the this contributor seems to advocate.

A small but vocal minority of Roxborough residents has been trying for years to transform Roxborough Park into a gated community in the name of increased security. They give the distinct impression that they see this as a way to keep out the riffraff, or the "lookie loos" as the previous forum contributor calls them. My wife and I strongly

object to any attempt to destroy the spirit of this unique community by locking us all in behind closed gates. We also view the current "illusion of security" at the park entrance as a waste of residents' money that could and should be more wisely spent.

If some kind of traffic monitoring is absolutely necessary, the community would be better served by replacing the very expensive 24/7 greeters at the "guard shack" with an automated camera to record vehicle license plates. The six figure annual savings could pay for most of the inevitable cost overruns on the community center and might even permit a reduction in assessments for the next few years. To us, it simply isn't worth having every Roxborough park resident pay over \$120 a year for someone to write license plate numbers on a clipboard.

Finally, here's a suggestion for the community center. The design should be required to incorporate some of the more effective "green" energy saving features. For example, too many commercial buildings today require expensive year round climate control regardless of the outside weather. The community center should be designed up front with adequate ventilation (including windows that open!) to be comfortable without air conditioning when outside temperatures are moderate.

FORUM RESPONSE: Thank you B. Your suggestions regarding the proposed office building project are particularly timely.

SUBMITTED BY D: I notice that the speed limit in the southern end of the park has been posted at 20 mph and the Foundation has spent a great deal of money to putting up radar speed indicator signs. With no cross streets, in my humble opinion the speed limit is too low. What purpose does this all serve?

A common strategy for many public entities is to place artificially low speed limits to enable the entity to generate revenues writing speeding tickets. Is that what the public sector types who run the foundation have in mind eventually for Roxborough Park? What has happened to the idea of the Foundation serving the residents instead of vice versa as it appears to be?

FORUM RESPONSE: Thank you D: Perhaps we can hear from the Traffic Safety Committee on your submission.

SUBMITTED BY W: Perspective of Community Center from A Roxborough Park Townhouse Owner

Among the 99 townhome lot owners in Roxborough Park who pay the Roxborough Park Foundation assessments is the oldest townhome association in the park, Ramparts at Roxborough. Ramparts is a 31-year old, 32-unit complex that has not received maintenance of our roads and draining despite paying the same full assessments that all other park lot owners are required to pay to receive these services from the Foundation.

It is difficult for me as a Roxborough Park townhome owner to support a community center estimated to cost \$979,000 for free-of-charge facility use by some residents for occasional "weddings, receptions, anniversaries, graduation parties, family gatherings, youth events, card parties." It is especially difficult to support the center funded by the

\$835 collected from me and reserved by the Board over a 4-year period without my knowledge or approval while 31 years of assessments were paid by Ramparts lot owners for roads and draining services that the Foundation did not provide.

When funding for services that are the responsibility of the Foundation are not delivered, it is difficult to vote to use Foundation assessments for an enhancement for occasional use by some residents. Similar resources for these occasional uses are available in existing resources such as the fire station, the Arrowhead golf club, and the Roxborough library. It seems the desire to provide an occasional use facility is a higher priority for the Foundation than the responsibility to provide required infrastructure services to assessment paying residents with the assessments it collects from residents.

Besides the argument for the community center as a resource for “weddings, receptions, anniversaries, graduation parties, family gatherings, youth events, card parties” the Community Center Building Committee suggests that the community center could provide on-site Foundations office space. Even with the marginal amount of resident interfacing work that the Foundation staff does, continuing to rent a \$30,000 to \$40,000 office space off-site is a value that can be funded for the next 25 years including inflation increases with the pre-collected \$874,000 community center fund and result in a decrease in our future annual Foundation assessments. And if an analysis of Foundation office space was conducted, it seems that considering a virtual office would be more economical and efficient than either a community center or off-site leased office space.

The \$979,000 estimate for the community center does not include the cost of operating and maintenance assessments that will need to be funded through the assessments of Roxborough Park residents to operate and maintain the building used at no charge by some residents.

If the \$874,000 that the Foundation has collected was used to rent an office space AND reduce the annual assessments due to the elimination of office rental costs from pre-collected assessments, Roxborough properties would indeed have a true competitive value that an occasionally used \$979,000 community center cannot provide and other successful HOAs could envy.

That’s all for now folks. More in about two weeks. Please continue to send your thoughts, questions, comments, and suggestions to roxboroughforum@earthlink.net **Mailto: roxboroughforum@earthlink.net> and pass the Forum on to your friends and neighbors. We would like to increase our membership.**

Bye