

## *Coalition for Cobbs Hill Park Position on Proposed Cobbs Hill Village*

We oppose Rochester Management Inc.'s (RMI) plans to demolish the existing one story village that nestles unobtrusively into Cobbs Hill Park, and build in its place multi-story units. We support the village in its current form until 2041. We oppose any request for extension of the reversion to the city beyond that date.

### **Demolishing the current property would, over the next few years, significantly diminish the stock of housing for Rochester's low-income seniors.**

- Rentals for the new units would be affordable to those with moderate incomes (estimated \$26,000 to \$42,000), rather than those with very low incomes (\$13,000 to \$20,000) for the current units.
- Although RMI has said that rents for current Cobbs Hill Village residents would not increase, rents would increase to market and middle-income rates as they move out.
- The existing buildings have been maintained in satisfactory condition. A detailed architectural survey indicated that moderate rehabilitation to provide better accessibility, energy efficiency, and comfort can be provided for under ten percent of replacement units. NY Housing and Community Renewal have informed us that funds for these upgrades can be made available.
- The current building and site layout are a good example of retirement community planning advocated by experts.



### **RMI's proposal would have a significant negative impact on Cobbs Hill Park, its users, and the surrounding environment.**

- Parks are an essential city infrastructure requirement, contributing to health, community, and economic well being. Cobbs Hill Park is seeing increasing use by residents of all ages from all over Rochester.
- The land that is Cobbs Hill Park was donated to the City by private citizens to be used exclusively as parkland. Ten acres was excised for emergency, first to house POWs, later to house elderly Rochester residents. There is no longer an emergency. Rochester has underutilized developable land available and the city has an obligation to honor the original donor's intent.
- The new, two and three-story buildings would introduce a much larger, more obvious, presence within the park, diminishing the current viewscape.
- The construction would result in the loss of multiple old trees.
- Construction will continue for four years, bringing additional construction vehicles and noise to the park and distress to the current tenants.
- Land which will be returned to the City in 2041, and could then become parkland, would be alienated for many more years.
- New construction would require the demolition of solid buildings that have many years of service left in them. It would be incompatible with the City of Rochester's commitment to sustainability, as embodied in the city's stated ambition to become "a model for innovative, ecologically sustainable operations."

## **Our position**

- Cobbs Hill Village should retain its current visual character, size, and scope.
- RMI should make the capital investments necessary to improve and maintain the current buildings, or pass their management to another organization that will.
- City Council should put in motion whatever is necessary to return the plot to Cobbs Hill Park in 2041.
- City Council should deal directly with the Cobbs Hill Tenants Association, the legal representative of the Cobbs Hill Village tenants, and not through village tenants brought together by RMI
- The RMI mission, approved by the IRS for its non-profit status, is "To provide clean, safe, well maintained, and affordable apartments and townhouses, suitable for anyone, in many locations throughout Rochester, New York." Building market rate units does not fall within the RMI mission

## **Coalition for Cobbs Hill Park Organizational Members**

- ABC Neighborhood Association. Tom Pastecki, President (tpastecki@gmail.com)
- Cobbs Hill Village Tenants Association. Lee Sengbush, President (leeseng@localnet.com)
- Elder Justice Committee of Metro Justice. Hugh Mitchell (goshawk@twc.com)
- Friends of Washington Grove, Inc. Andrew Seager, President (Andrew.j.seager@gmail.com)
- Sierra Club of Rochester. Peter Debes representative (phdebes@frontiernet.net)
- Upper Monroe Neighborhood Association. Chris Stevens, President (ChrisatUMNA@gmail.com)
- Richard Rosen, Architect/Advisor, (rosen182@gmail.com)

***This growing list of neighborhood groups and organizations are united and stand opposed to RMI's construction plans and support these comments and documents submitted by the Coalition.***

- North Winton Village. Mary Coffey (marycoffey0@gmail.com)
- PLEX. Dorothy Hall (dhall555@hotmail.com)
- Maplewood Neighborhood Association. Kim Hare (coalitionofneighborhoods@gmail.com)
- Lyell-Otis Neighborhood Association. Pamela Davis nicenrg@aol.com)
- Charlotte Community Association. Jonathan Hardin CCA ([mrjhardin@yahoo.com](mailto:mrjhardin@yahoo.com))
- Park-Meigs Neighborhood Association. John Lembach ([jlembach@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jlembach@rochester.rr.com))
- Beechwood Transition. Juanita Ball ([cityeasttransition@gmail.com](mailto:cityeasttransition@gmail.com))
- East Main, Mustard & Atlantic Avenue Neighborhood (EMMA). Sunshine Jacobs (ourneighborhood2015@gmail.com)
- Canterbury-Harvard Jerry Wolf ([chnanews@gmail.com](mailto:chnanews@gmail.com))
- Lyell Ave Neighbors. John Lippa (JNLippa@yahoo.com)
- Cottage Street Block Club (cottagestreetneighbors@gmail.com)
- Barrington Street Neighborhood Association Barbara Ball (gball@rochester.rr.com)
- NEMNU, Bryce Miller (ritcityguy@yahoo.com)
- EMMA, Dorothy Parham (tilco7@yahoo.com)