



WILLIAM RUSSELL ROBINSON DISTRICT 10

MEMBER,
APPOINTMENT
REVIEW, PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES REVIEW,
HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES, PUBLIC
SAFETY, AND PUBLIC
WORKS

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For Immediate Release

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Council Member Robinson Comments on Proposed Deer Lakes Lease Ordinance

7 April 2014 –After a review of the proposed ordinance to allow for a license to drill for gas under Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County Council Member William Russell Robinson releases his initial concerns.

“There are possibly other issues within the terms of this 81-page lease, issues which must be vetted through a non-partial professional attorney with knowledge of oil and gas law. However, upon an initial reading there are a few glaring issues which cause me great concern and give me pause on approving such an ordinance as written.”

“Firstly, the language within the proposed ordinance taken together with the proposed lease would in essence delegate all bargaining power to the Administration upon Council’s initial approval. Essentially, the lease and ordinance are written to allow for changes to the lease going forward but only upon approval of the “Lessor” whose definition only includes the Chief Executive, County Manager, and County Solicitor. In other words, it completely usurps County Council’s review of any future terms or changes.”

“For a lease that purports to be active for upwards of 30 years I find it unconscionable that the legislative branch, elected to represent the constituents throughout Allegheny County and their diverse interests and opinions would be cut out of the process. This concern is exacerbated by the fact that we are delegating our authority for years into the future at which time we do know who will be holding the offices which are granted this unlimited authority.”

Allegheny County Home Rule Charter gives County Council the authority to lease and convey or permit the use of County land in Article IV, Section 2 (K). Further, the Administrative Code Section 1.5-502 explicitly limits the Executive’s power to negotiate contracts by excepting all negotiations of contracts contained within section (K) or contracts involving the leasing of County land.

“Secondly, as a member of the Professional Services Review Committee, it gravely concerns me that the Committee, on which several members of Council serve, were not given the opportunity to review the contract for services with the Stoncipher Law Firm whom the Administration utilized to assist with the Deer Lakes Lease negotiations. This is in direct violation of Section

905.03 of the Administrative Code which requires a vetting of all professional service contracts through the PSRC prior to the decision to hire any firm for legal services.”

“These examples are evidence that the legislative body has been cut out of the process in deciding a most delicate economic and environmental matter that has been one of the most controversial that I have ever been involved with on Council. I cannot support this ordinance as written as it is an offense to the doctrine of separation of powers that is essential to our Democracy.”

For more information, contact Council Member Robinson at 412-350-6570.

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