

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 02/27/2019

City Violates Charter in Granting BGE/Exelon Right to Construct and Use Pipeline in Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park

In 2017, Baltimore City entered into an agreement purporting to grant BGE/Exelon the right to construct a 2 mile pipeline through the heart of the Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, removing over 12 acres of mature forest. BGE/Exelon initially offered to pay the City just \$179,000 for the right to use the property for the pipeline. Because the pipeline route will remain a scar through the park this amount was rejected. The City's own experts then calculated that the fee for use to pump gas through the park, maintaining a clear-cut through formerly mature forest and thus removing it from recreational use, should be \$14M for the initial term of 25 years. For unknown reasons the Mayor rejected that calculation and eventually agreed to accept a mere \$1.4M from BGE/Exelon. This is a travesty and an affront to all who value and use parks in Baltimore City. This formerly forested parkland will remain a clear-cut for generations and those who understand the value of parks know it is worth far more than \$1.4M!

The Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park ('FOGFLP') recently discovered, through legal counsel, that the City granted BGE/Exelon the right to construct and use the pipeline in violation of the City Charter. In other words, the pipeline has been constructed illegally. This revelation calls into question the entire process and the thoroughness with which the City administration examined the \$1.4M settlement it agreed to from BGE/Exelon.

In a letter from our attorney dated January 10, 2019, FOGFLP made the City aware of this "clear and direct violation" of the City Charter and requested that a new inquiry be conducted, in accordance with the Charter, into the terms and conditions of the City's agreement with BGE/Exelon, including those pertaining to the amount of compensation that should be paid by BGE/Exelon for removing parkland from its intended use. The City Charter specifically requires the City to "fix the compensation at the largest amount it may be able to obtain." The City has clearly fallen short in this duty.

FOGFLP is currently working with the City and BGE/Exelon to resolve this fundamental legal problem.

For more information / If you wish to help us preserve Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, please contact Jack Lattimore, FOGFLP Board Member, at 443-415-1103 or pipelineinquiries@friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org

The mission of Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park: "Through advocacy and collaboration, Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, Inc. assures the restoration and maintenance of the Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park as an historic area and healthy urban wilderness in Baltimore City for the experience, learning and enjoyment of all." At 1200 acres, Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park is the largest public park in Baltimore City and the second largest urban wilderness park in the nation.