

Battle Over Nationals Ballpark Land Costs Still On-Going

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A battle over land costs where the new Nationals stadium is rising is still occurring, almost a year after a D.C. judge ordered a group of small-business owners to abandon a 20-acre site in Southeast Washington, and the ballpark on track to open in 2008.

While the business owners complied with the judge's ruling, the battle over what is deemed a fair price for the land continues in the courts. As [reported by the Washington Post](#) :

When the District announced plans to build the ballpark, city attorneys began negotiating with 23 property owners to buy their properties. A handful of owners agreed to sell, but the majority held out for more money, and the city seized their land through eminent domain.

The city offered \$98 million for all the properties, including about \$84 million for those being seized through legal actions. Judge Joan Zeldon agreed last year to transfer the land to the city so the stadium could move forward, but she allowed the business owners to continue their pursuit of additional money.

The businesses that are fighting include an asphalt plant, a trash transfer station and a bus garage. Collectively, the owners are seeking tens of millions of dollars more than the city offered, and the outcome of the negotiations or trials could drive up the cost of the stadium project.