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Arlington to file condemnation cases on 51 plots City officials out to obtain land needed for Cowboys stadium *JEFF MOSIER Staff Writer*

City officials expect to file condemnation cases within the next few weeks against 51 properties at the site of the future Dallas Cowboys stadium.

The City Council authorized the legal action Tuesday that affects 18 property owners. City Attorney Jay Doegey said he expects the civil cases to be filed with the Tarrant County district clerk's office by the second week of July.

"They've had time to consider the offers and get their own appraisals or make a counteroffer," Mr. Doegey said.

The vote was taken without any discussion by the council. Eminent domain issues were on a closed session agenda earlier in the day. None of the affected property owners signed up to speak.

Twelve of the 51 properties targeted for condemnation are occupied by their owners, according to data from the Tarrant Appraisal District. Of the remaining 39 rental houses or vacant lots, 35 are owned by two landlords who also live in the neighborhood. Officials have said they would use eminent domain only as a last resort.

The council had already bought about a dozen properties in the neighborhoods near Collins Street and Randol Mill Road. Nine more homes were purchased Tuesday.

The city is offering incentives, ranging from \$5,250 to \$22,500, for owners or tenants who settle on a price without going to court and agree to move quickly. Mayor Robert Cluck has said the city is trying to purchase all the land needed for the \$650 million stadium by the end of the year so that earthwork can start in early 2006.

The stadium, jointly funded by the city and the Cowboys, is scheduled to open in 2009.

The council vote comes less than a week after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that governments could take property for economic development projects. In response, U.S. Sen. John Cornyn introduced legislation Monday to halt the use of eminent domain for economic development purposes.

Also, state Rep. Frank J. Corte Jr. of San Antonio has said he would propose an amendment to bar local governments from condemning property "if a primary purpose of the taking is for economic development."

A spokeswoman for Mr. Corte's office said that Gov. Rick Perry has not committed to allowing that issue to be raised in a special session but that it could be discussed after an education funding plan is approved. Any state constitutional amendment would have to be approved by voters.

Glenn Sodd, an eminent domain attorney who has received calls from several of the Arlington property

owners, said he doubts that any federal legislation or state constitutional amendment would affect the Cowboys project.

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