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Woman to get \$2.75M for land **Arlington: City offers its largest payout for tract in stadium's path** *JEFF MOSIER Staff Writer*

ARLINGTON - Evelyn Wray's months of living out of a suitcase are almost over.

The Arlington City Council agreed Tuesday night to pay the 72-year-old woman \$2.75 million for her house and 4 acres the city condemned for the new Dallas Cowboys stadium. It's by far the largest payout for residential property acquired for the stadium.

"I can buy something and stop living in my car," Mrs. Wray said, chuckling. "I've been basically living out of suitcases from here to there."

Mrs. Wray said she found some houses she liked but didn't want to make a decision until she knew how much the city would pay. Mrs. Wray said she's stayed with friends and family since moving out of her home on Randol Mill Road in March. Most recently, she has lived in a friend's garage apartment in Hillsboro.

Her fight to get what she thought was a fair price from the city has generated much media attention during the past year. When she held a garage sale to clear out some of her possessions, a talk radio station broadcast from her property.

Mrs. Wray's attorney, Glenn Sodd, who specializes in eminent domain cases, argued that the land should be valued at commercial prices. It was on a major thoroughfare and across the street from a new Wal-Mart Supercenter.

The original offer to Mrs. Wray was \$351,000, but a court-appointed panel set the value at \$1.2 million. However, she continued her fight in the county courts, and the city finally settled for more than twice that amount.

Jay Doegey, Arlington's city attorney, said he was glad to get that and two other properties settled at Tuesday's meeting. The other properties, commercial tracts on Collins Street, were settled for sale prices of \$1.15 million and \$1.2 million.

Although most of the land has been acquired for the \$650 million stadium and excavation work is nearly completed, dozens of lawsuits are still pending, Mr. Doegey said. The stadium is scheduled to open in time for the 2009 season.

"It could take three or four years," he said about the long legal process.

Mr. Doegey said that most of the current lawsuits were filed by two landlords who owned a majority of the residential tracts. He said that each piece of property would have to be litigated separately, which will extend the process.

While the legal fights continue, Mrs. Wray plans to continue her house hunting. She likes Hillsboro, but

it's an hour away from her grandchildren in Arlington and Hurst.

But Mrs. Wray said she would never consider moving back to Arlington after the city forced her from her home.

"I can never replace what I had, no matter what they pay me," she said.

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