

Belward heirs appeal suit against Johns Hopkins University

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The heirs to the family that sold [Johns Hopkins University](#) a swath of land for its proposed Science City tech campus in Rockville have appealed the rejection of their lawsuit challenging the scope of the Baltimore-based university's multimillion-dollar development plan.

The heirs [filed their appeal in the Montgomery County Circuit Court Wednesday](#). In it, they claim Judge [Ronald Rubin](#) failed to properly consider the case history when he issued a written opinion Nov. 9 rejecting the suit. [John Timothy Newell](#), one of the Belward heirs, noted Rubin was not the same judge as had presided over prior motions in the case and did not provide any explanation for rejecting the case in his ruling.

“He simply used Hopkins’ draft order as his own, scratching out some words with a pen and signing his name,” Newell. said.

Newell and several other heirs filed their suit in November 2011. [They claim Hopkins had overstepped the bounds of its agreement to buy the 138-acre Belward Farm](#). The suit claims that Hopkins was given a reduced price for the land — \$5 million instead of the market rate of \$54 million — on the condition it use the property for “academic, research and development, delivery of health and medical care and services, or related purposes.”

The heirs take issue with Hopkins’ current plans, which they say have been expanded to include office and residential space beyond the scope of the 1988 sale agreement.

Hopkins has disputed the argument. [In his ruling, Rubin wrote that Hopkins is not limited in terms of the scale and density of the development and that its plans are in keeping with the agreement.](#)

Daniel J. Sernovitz covers commercial real estate.

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