

Belward Farm/JHU Lawsuit Moves Forward: Judge, Hearing Details Assigned

Rockville, MD – After the Montgomery County (MD) Circuit Court refused to dismiss a lawsuit over Johns Hopkins University’s development plans for Belward Farm, the university reversed course from delaying the case to rushing a decision: In early April Hopkins filed a motion requesting the case be fast-tracked.

In response, Judge John W. Debelius, III issued a decision this week assigning the case to the Court’s [Business and Technology Case Management Program, Expedited Track 5](#) and setting the scheduling hearing for July 6, 2012 before Judge Ronald B. Rubin.

Judge Rubin will set the pretrial schedule for the case and ultimately issue the final decision.

“We are moving forward with discovery and are confident that once the facts are revealed and made plain, the Judge will agree that the restriction of the Belward Farm sale was tied to its expected use as a JHU owned-and-operated college campus,” said John Timothy (“Tim”) Newell, lead plaintiff and family spokesperson.

“Elizabeth Beall Banks would never have gifted the Farm towards a multi-million dollar ‘Science City’ development that has nothing to do with academics but everything to with profiteering – a development which Hopkins doesn’t even plan to occupy,” Newell added.

The lawsuit, John Timothy Newell et.al. v. Johns Hopkins University, was originally filed November 10 in Montgomery County (MD) Circuit Court. The lawsuit alleges that the university’s new plan to develop the 138-acre Belward Farm violates the use restrictions set forth in the 1989 contract that transferred ownership of the farm from Elizabeth Beall Banks, who lived on and operated the farm, and her two siblings, to the University.

“It is sad and ironic that Johns Hopkins, the university my Aunt Elizabeth was so fond of, has become the type of developer she tried so hard to protect the Farm from,” Newell said.

“It is also unsettling to think that a family with the best of intentions to support a top university and preserve a farm of historical importance must resort to lawyers, Courts and trials to ensure their legal rights and donative intent are not ignored.

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