

# Dallas ISD Eminent Domain Fight With Business Owner Over Before it Starts

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The meeting at Jill Stone Elementary school to discuss the possibility of using eminent domain to acquire property for a new school was over before it really started.

"On behalf of the district, I don't think we did a good job," said Scott Layne, director of operations at Dallas Independent School District, at the Wednesday night meeting. "I offer an apology."

Layne and School Board President Dan Micciche told the crowd of residents and business owners that a proposal to build a new school where small businesses sit down will be tabled. The proposed new school was supposed to alleviate overcrowding at Jill Stone and Hotchkiss Elementary Schools.

It was supposed to be part of a bond package passed by voters in 2015 to relocate or rebuild some of Dallas ISD's schools.

"These guys are going to go back to the drawing board and do it right," Micciche said. "It's not going to happen, and if it happens, it will be one of those things that will basically be over my dead body."

Some business owners in Northeast Dallas near Abrams Road and Skillman Street received letters from DISD expressing a desire to purchase their properties or use eminent domain to acquire them, if necessary. District officials said the letters should not have contained that language, since eminent domain is a last choice.

"It's you that needs to clean up the process and communicate better with our homeowners," one woman told Layne.

Layne told the crowd he met with realtors on Wednesday and asked them to come up with alternative sites for a new school.

"When they said eminent domain, you immediately think you can't fight this, you don't have a chance," said Jim Reynolds, whose wife owns a business that was threatened with eminent domain.

Reynolds said they did fight.

"Yeah, we did. In numbers," he said.

The meeting ended an hour after it started, with a new direction.

"The community has given input and does not want the school at that location," said Micciche. "We've got to do it the right way and we're going to get it right."