

Monroe Evening News, The (MI)

September 22, 2007

What do you do in the face of eminent domain?

If you're approached by an oil company, gas company, or any other utility, eminent domain attorney Alan **Ackerman** says there are a few things you can do to ensure you're treated fairly.

Mr. **Ackerman** first suggested retaining a lawyer or at least consulting with one throughout the process. In most cases, he said, the entity attempting to obtain land or get easements will be responsible for homeowners' legal fees under Michigan law.

However, those who shy from attorneys also have options:

- Keep quiet, get the offer in writing and figure out what the basis for the offer is. Keeping quiet at this stage is important, said Mr. **Ackerman**, since whatever you say can be used later.
- Figure out exactly where the pipeline, wires, etc., are being installed. How will this affect the property next year? In 20 years? Does it destroy the farm tiles?
- Make sure you know what your local government mandates.
- Get everything in writing, make sure you can understand it and make sure it's specific. Do not sign anything until you have read it thoroughly and understand it.
- Keep the property well maintained.
- Keep in mind the people who come to negotiate the use of your property are professionals at this.
- Get an independent assessment.
- Get exact definitions.
- Beware of the tactics.

Copyright ©. All Rights Reserved.