



Judy Kuchenmeister, front left, shares coffee with her neighbors

“The Trailer Park Today, Your House Tomorrow”

Judy Kuchenmeister has been living under the threat of losing her home for a long time.

She moved into Brown’s Mobile Home Park 33 years ago. Even back then, there were rumors that someone wanted to buy the park, drive out the residents and make the area into something “better.”

But it never got this close.

“You’re like walking on eggshells all the time,” says Kuchenmeister of the wait for another court decision.

And she worries that even if the court decides in the residents’ favor, the town might try to start the redevelopment process all over again.

“That’s the part that’s really depressing,” she says. “You don’t mind living like this for awhile. But not forever. Sometimes, it feels like this will never be over.”

Kuchenmeister also worries about what will happen to her and the other residents if they lose.

“Some of the people are on fixed incomes,” she notes. “If they did close the trailer park, there’s a 10-year waiting period for public housing. Where will they go?”

The former bookkeeper lives alone, with just her cat, Diva, to keep her company. But she finds community in her caring neighbors.

“It’s much more of a community,” she says. “How many people know their neighbors? People here know each other. They help each other.”

Kuchenmeister understands that the battle being waged in Lodi is just one fight. Under the current law, she knows that just about anyone could become a target of eminent domain.

“It’s the trailer park today, your house tomorrow.”