

Council ends eminent domain attempt

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By **SUZANNE TRAVERS**
HERALD NEWS

LODI — Residents of two trailer parks rejoiced Tuesday after the Borough Council ended an attempt to use eminent domain to seize private land for use by a developer.

At a Monday night meeting, the five-member council voted unanimously to drop the appeal of a lower state court decision that found the borough had no grounds to seize the land at Brown's Trailer Park and Costa Trailer Court. More than 40 residents live in trailers at the trailer parks along heavily-traveled Route 46.

Kendall Kardt, president of Save Our Homes, a group of trailer park residents who fought the town's seizure attempt, said about 20 members of the group attended the meeting and applauded the council vote.

"Everybody was very happy," Kardt said Tuesday. "I believe that a lot of people in town found this repugnant on a lot of levels. They felt threatened themselves by the idea that eminent domain could be used to put people out of their homes."

Councilman Marc Schrieks had supported the borough's attempt to seize the land on the grounds that private development there would create new tax revenue, and also voted to appeal a state Superior Court judge's 2005 decision that found the borough had not provided sufficient evidence that the trailer parks met the criteria for a blight designation. The case was argued at the Appellate Division of state Superior Court in Hackensack in January, but the panel has not yet issued a ruling.

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