

Planners deadlock, Ward's future unclear

By ANN BECKER
Of the Emerald

The city planning commission deadlocked in a 3-3 tie Monday night concerning the rezoning of land for a planned expansion of Valley River shopping center.

Valley River had requested rezoning of 21 acres west of the present mall so that a Montgomery Ward store could be added.

Originally, the planning commission had recommended that the application be denied. Valley River then took the matter to the city council, which granted a tentative approval. This decision returned the matter to the planning commission, which held two nights of public hearings and discussion with the city council sitting in.

Because of the deadlocked vote no recommendation from the planning commission will be given to the council, which has the ultimate authority in approving the rezoning.

Lively discussion highlighted most of the meeting Thursday night in a council chamber packed with spectators.

Members of the planning commission and council discussed such problems as the future of mass transit, the downtown core area and river-front development in Eugene.

One reason so much controversy has centered around this rezoning is that some citizens feel that Montgomery Ward's move from their downtown location out to Valley River may start a trend, leaving the downtown area filled with offices and banks, but little retail trade.

The "1990 Plan"

This, they say, would be contrary to the general plan for Eugene's future, the 1990 plan.

The 1990 plan is an important factor in the rezoning question since the council's decision must be made according to the Fasano ruling of the Oregon Supreme

Court. This ruling stipulates that the group applying for a zone change must come before the council and prove with findings of fact that (1) the zone change would not conflict with the overall community plan; (2) a public need for the zone change exists and (3) that the property in question is better than any other property available that is already zoned for that purpose.

The question of whether the rezoning is contrary to the 1990 plan occupied a major part of the evening. Allen Maxwell of the planning commission pointed out that the plan itself is contradictory. While it says that the downtown area should be retained as the heart of the community and that retail activity should be carried on there, it also says that Valley River is a particularly suitable area for commercial zoning and retail activity.

Maxwell said that because of this attention must be paid to both areas. He said, "In order to maintain competition between the two centers each must be allowed to grow at the same speed, or by quasi-judicial statement you are benefitting one at the expense of the other."

Councilman Neal Murray also stressed the importance of retaining the downtown retail function. "The central business district is the only area zoned C-3," he said, which is the zoning classification for "intensive commercial activity." He said that Valley River Center's argument fell "substantially short" of proving the need for further commercial development of the Goodpasture Island Road at this time.

Thomas Williams, of the city council, urged the council and commission to consider the findings of a study compiled last year for the Lane County Auditorium Association. Saying that the document was the only one presented not prepared from an advocacy point of view and

that was done by an impartial economist, Williams said that the document stated that "The downtown area is undergoing a period of dynamic transition." He said that this land use feasibility study reported that downtown merchants can't hope to keep up with Valley River, and the future role of the downtown area would be primarily a location for government offices, business offices and finance.

Community shaping

John Porter, a member of the city planners staff, cited an older study of land use marketability which contradicted Williams' argument. Porter stressed that "public policy has some say in what shapes the community instead of just listening to what an economist says is happening."

Robert Thomas of the Eugene Renewal Agency (ERA) was questioned about the ability of the downtown area to support retail trade. He agreed with Porter, saying that while no study has been done to determine this, "the policy of the council can determine what the answer to that question will be."

Thomas was also questioned about the possibility of Wards relocating downtown. He said that the ERA had contacted them "numerous times" but that they had informed him of an earlier management decision not to build any more stores in downtown areas, since Wards likes to stay open on Sunday. They feel that regional shopping centers are more suited to their purposes as a "hard line merchandiser."

Thomas said that if Wards had wanted to relocate downtown they could have found sites with over 50,000 square feet of floor space, with parking nearby, but that the ERA did not acquire these sites since they were not approached by any large retail establishment. "There are still sites available," he said.

One of the reasons Wards did not want to locate downtown,

Remodeling projects discussed by CPC

The Campus Planning Committee (CPC) discussed the remodeling of the west stands at Hayward Field and a series of other remodeling projects in the first CPC meeting of the academic year held Tuesday in the EMU.

The present plan for construction of 5,000 uncovered seats replacing the old west stands at Hayward field has begun, with demolition currently under way. The old benches are gone, but the risers and roof are still there. A fund of \$600,000 has tentatively been raised for the project through private subscription.

Actual construction awaits the settlement of contractor bidding. The construction plan makes allowance for addition of a roof at some later time.

The Omnibus Remodeling Project calls for improvement of 10 campus buildings. Most of the improvements involve the deletion of fire hazards. In addition, the plan provides increased access for handicapped persons to both Commonwealth Hall and Condon Hall by the installation of elevators. Another aspect of the plan allows for shifting the home economics department out of its current place in Chapman Hall, and into Gerlinger where it would be nearer to classes in nutrition. As a result of that move, the School of Librarianship could use space in Chapman Hall. This would allow the Browsing Room, which is currently in the EMU, to be relocated in the University Library and it would create more space for student usage in the EMU.

This year the committee has a new chairman, Jerry Diethelm. He has organized eight subcommittees which partially rely on assistance of non-CPC members.

No final action was taken at the meeting.

according to John Burgess, regional real estate manager of Wards, was that parking facilities would be too expensive to construct. That is also one of the main reasons that they wanted the land rezoned at Valley River — so that adequate parking could be provided.

Vernon Gleaves, attorney for Valley River, in his initial argument pointed out that they were seeking 3.93 parking spaces per 1000 square feet of usable floor space. This is far below, he contends, what the Urban Land Institute (ULI) cites as the proper figure for a regional shopping center.

Parking disagreement

James Saul, of the city planner's office, when giving his staff report said that they found the ULI's figures too large, since the figure of 5.5 spaces per 1000 square feet that they arrived at was figured in the peak Christ-

mas shopping season in 1964, when the mass transit systems in the U.S. were not as developed.

Saul also disagreed with Gleaves' earlier argument about the downtown free parking program. Gleaves said Thursday night that to deny Valley River's request for rezoning on the basis of the parking space requested was "inconsistent policy application."

Saul denied this, saying that the free parking recently okayed by the council was not creating any new parking spaces and that the council was merely trying to make the downtown area as attractive as Valley River. The parking ratio in the central business district, according to Saul, is 2.25 spaces per 1000 square feet within retail establishments.

Councilmen James Hershner and Gus Keller both argued that the parking requests of Valley

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Staffed to meet needs

Center aids 'typical student'

George Ralph, newly appointed director of the University Counseling Center, emphasizes that the Center "meets the needs of the typical student."

A counseling psychologist at the Center for the last six years, Ralph feels that his job as director is "facilitating the activities that are important to the professional staff" for meeting those needs.

"What we are interested in," says Ralph, "is how a person behaves and what the outcome of this behavior is. And how the counselors can give people insight into the facilities of the implementation of any potential of a human being."

Ralph feels that many people misconceive of the Center as an "advice giving agency"; or as a place for emotionally ill people only.

A Ph.D. in counseling psychology, he says that everybody, at one time in their lives, has personal problems and the staff of professional counselors respond very much like personal friends. The most important part of their job, he explains, is to listen.

However, he says that a professional "is skilled in applying psychological principles for resolution of conflict." Subsequently he can shorten the time it takes a person to understand his situation.

He foresees no major changes in the Center's tasks of helping students with examination anxiety, family problems, personal relations with others or any other of the considerable pressures that he feels students encounter.

The program of "Academic Survival," primarily in the dorms, will continue this year. Counselors will talk to students and invite them to the Center for individual talks. He thinks the added responsibility along with the pressure which college entails is especially difficult for new students. They sometimes have difficulty managing their time and meeting continual deadlines.

One of Ralph's particular interests is group therapy which he says is a "controlled group where members can experiment." People receive "feedback on how they come across," he explains and they also learn what others expect of them. He says that it gives everybody an opportunity to discover more about themselves and other people.

He dislikes psychological labels. He once worked in a hospital where nearly half the patients were admitted as "undifferentiated schizophrenics." This he felt was useless because such categorizing promotes prejudice and impedes understanding of individuals.

Most people come to the Counseling Center on referral from faculty members or the Health Center. Since the Center does virtually no publicizing, few students know about it.

But tight funding (the Center receives no grant monies) precludes any advertising. The Counseling Center will continue to be known primarily by word of mouth.



George Ralph

Photos by Scott Strauss