

City council passes development charge

By LARRY JAFFE
Of the Emerald

The issue seemed clear to former Mayor Les Anderson, who said, "Shall Eugene continue to subsidize new development without added help from the owners of new development?"

Evidently the issue wasn't so simple for council members. After two hours of debate and public testimony Monday night, the Eugene City Council approved Councilor Jack Delay's resolution to "move in the direction of a more equitable system of assessment."

Although the "systems development charge" (SDC) was approved, the details will have to be worked out later.

According to Anderson, the charge would average 1.2 to two percent of the value of building permit. The fee would be paid by developers at the time the building permit is issued.

Anderson said the plan is designed to provide funds to reduce assessment to property owners and reduce subsidies to builders.

Currently, adjacent property owners pay about 60 percent of the cost for street and sewer im-

provements required because of new construction. City funds subsidize the remaining 40 percent.

Anderson estimated the city's annual subsidy for new services at about \$2 million.

Betty Niven of the Joint Housing Committee objected to the proposed SDC. Niven said builders would pass on the development charge to consumers, driving up the cost of new housing.

James Lemert, University journalism professor, led the public hearing on the SDC. Lemert read statements by neighborhood groups from Hawkins Highlands and Amazon Parkway favoring adoption of the SDC.

Lemert also disputed studies that said an SDC would not work, claiming one such study "did not exist."

Gilbert Hall, speaking for the South Hills Neighborhood Association, also favored adoption of the SDC. Hall said his group was directly involved, because some South Hills residents believe they were unfairly assessed for the widening of south Willamette Street in 1976. Hall conceded the charge would cause housing costs to rise.

"But it's better not to be able to

afford a house in the first place, than to be taxed out of a house you've lived in for years," he said.

Mary Wall, assistant to Bob Wood, Lane County commissioner, read a statement by Wood objecting to adoption of the SDC. The statement said the SDC would increase the cost of housing, interfere with compact growth by making it beneficial for people to build outside the city and be an unfair increase in the tax burden of property owners.

Councilor Tom Williams agreed that the SDC would be an incentive for people to move out of the city.

"In watching employees of ours over the years (Williams is the owner of Williams Bakery) I've found the distance employees live from the city center is inversely proportional to income. Increase the cost of housing in Eugene and you increase the pressure for blue-collar employees to move out of the city."

But Councilor Scott Lieuallen said the SDC would be the most equitable system of assessment.

He said "I suppose we could debate it forever. But there's no system of taxation that's going to please everyone."

ESCAPE heads noon activities at Bethel junior high schools

By MELODY WARD
Of the Emerald

The ESCAPE program has joined forces with two Bethel district junior high schools to provide a unique experience for students and University volunteers.

"Next year these schools will change from junior highs to middle schools," explains Mike Bednarek of ESCAPE. "With that change comes a switch in philosophy."

Bednarek says the middle school attempts to duplicate an elementary school environment more closely than that of high school to remove pressures on the students.

"It's more child-oriented than academic-oriented," he says. "In order to get the teachers and kids thinking along these lines, we've started an activity period during the lunch time."

University students receive an hour of upper division credit for each day they spend participating in what ESCAPE calls the Bethel Project. Although this is the third week of the term, interested persons can still join the program.

"Last term a graduate student in psychology did a drug information rap group, another lady did Spanish conversation and a couple people did role

playing," Bednarek recalls. "The administration and faculties of the district are amazingly supportive."

The activity session is non-graded and stresses cooperative learning.

"Because the kids are at different levels, we're trying to give them an environment where they can grow without the pressure to conform," Bednarek explains.

The project involves nearly 1,000 junior high school kids, the faculties of each school and University students who wish to participate.

"Anybody in secondary education can do this to fulfill their practicum requirement for student teaching," Bednarek adds. "But this is certainly not restricted to education majors."

Among the activities being offered this term are disco dancing, stained glass, winter recreation, photography, fly tying and creative writing.

The list of possibilities is endless and ESCAPE welcomes people who would like to create and teach their own programs.

"There are lots of kids who need more attention," Bednarek says. "Junior high is a growing, testing and challenging period in their development."

Interested students can register at the ESCAPE table in the EMU lobby. Students should have from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. free any day of the week. Transportation to the schools is provided.

Bees said more buzz than sting

Stories about ferocious killer bees making their way north from South America in search of victims in the United States are more buzz than sting, the Agriculture Department says.

"Don't worry," the department said. "The ferocious insects featured in magazines and newspapers, on television and in movies are fiction. The real bees behind the fiction are not that ferocious."

Moreover, the department's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service said today that the bees "have not been seen closer than 2,500 miles" from the southern U.S. border.

Even so, at their present rate of

migration the bees could arrive in the United States within 10 to 15 years, the agency said. Or sooner if some hitchhike by ship or airplane.

The super bee saga began after wild honey bees from Africa were introduced in Brazil for breeding with local honey bees in an experimental project. Swarms from 26 colonies escaped with their African queens, however, and arrived in the wilds of Brazil.

Officials said that the "Africanized" bees turned out to be "unusually aggressive" and required special handling.

"When they are disturbed, they attack in large numbers, keep up the stinging longer and chase the

intruder farther than most domestic bees," the report said. "Although the sting of Africanized bees is no more venomous than that of domestic bees, the attack of an Africanized swarm is definitely more frightening and painful — but not more deadly."

Observers also found that the hybrid bees tend to migrate greater distances, perhaps 50 miles or more when they feel the urge.

"So far, absconding swarms of Africanized bees have moved northward as far as Venezuela and westward into Peru and Bolivia," the report said. "They also have moved south into Uruguay and Argentina."

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