

Graduate teachers' union awaits contract approval

By ANN PORTAL
Of the Emerald

The University and the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation agreed on a two-year contract July 21, ending five months of negotiations — the shortest GTFF bargaining session to date.

The new contract, which awaits approval in October by returning GTFs, contains a 14.86-percent increase in the base salary over the next two years.

Jim Morgan, bargaining team member and co-secretary/treasurer of the union, says he feels the 800 University GTFs will vote on a good contract.

"We got some things... they (the University administration) got some things," he says.

"The last month of negotiations showed good negotiating spirit on both sides."

The settlement came after a five-hour mediation session conducted by state mediator Kathy Mistler, called in because contract negotiations had reached an impasse on June 23.

Shirley Menaker, associate graduate school dean and a member of the University's bargaining team, says she feels the union worked to negotiate a

good settlement for its membership, particularly within the current budget limitations.

"While there certainly were differences of opinion between the University and the GTFF, the University can live with the negotiated contract," she says.

One issue on which the administration and the union disagreed was the per-term workload of GTFs. The administration favored eliminating a 150-hour per-term "standard" GTF workload, which the union finally accepted.

However, the union kept a 175-hour "grievable limit," which allows GTFs working more than 175 hours each term to request higher pay or a reduced workload.

The elimination of the 150-hour standard shouldn't affect the workload of many GTFs, Morgan says. The new workload clause simply recognizes that everyone works at different speeds, and allows a 25-hour buffer zone, he says.

If ratified, the new contract would increase salaries 4 percent on September 16, 1981, 4 percent on May 1, 1982, 5.5 percent on September 16, 1982 and 1 percent on May 1, 1983.

Staggering the salary in-

creases allows the base salary rate to increase more, so salaries will be at a higher level when the next contract is negotiated, Morgan says.

The GTFF negotiating team feels the settlement is the best that could be obtained in a year of budget crisis — higher salaries would have taken money away from other areas, he says.

But union officials are disappointed that the Legislature failed to pass HB 2598, which would have allowed GTFs to bargain for a health care plan similar to one available to other state employees. The bill was defeated by just four votes, and probably will be re-introduced if special sessions are called during the biennium, Morgan says.

Other gains made by the union include language changes in various union articles. In addition, GTFs who hold an appointment one year and who have been appointed for the following fall term will gain access to the student health center during the summer months.

The University's GTFF, which was created by state law in 1975, is the only active union of graduate teaching assistants in the country.



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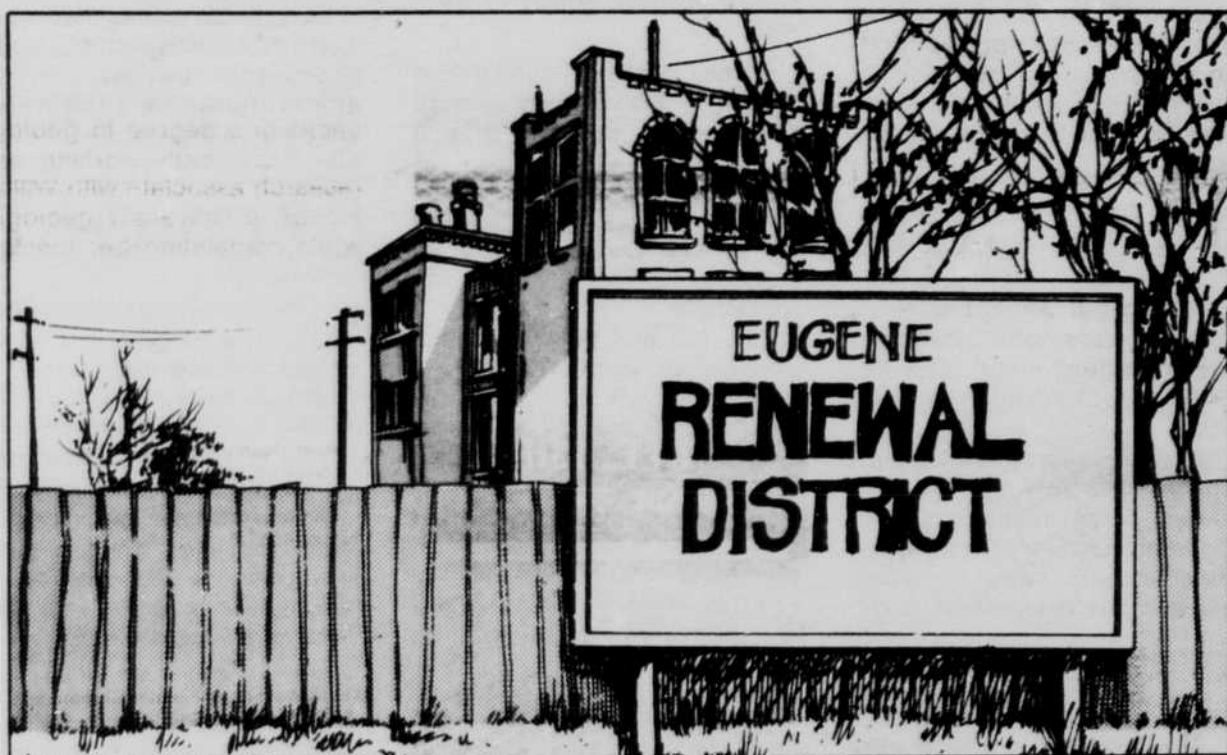


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City studies renewal plan

By HEIDI SWILLINGER
Of the Emerald

Money for new street lights, park benches and trees for an area encircling, but not including, the downtown mall may be just around the corner if a proposed urban renewal district wins public approval.

The new district, the brainchild of the Renewal Plan Advisory Committee, will come up for public debate Aug. 26. If the proposal is approved by the Eugene Renewal Agency, the Eugene Planning Commission and the Eugene City Council, funds for the addition of a number of "public amenities" will become available.

According to Jan Fiorato, information coordinator for the Housing and Community Conservation Department, the renewal study is being conducted in response to the city council's interest in increased downtown housing and commercial development.

But Fiorato says the committee also will emphasize preservation of older buildings.

"This committee wants to keep what's there and improve what we have," she says.

The proposed doughnut-shaped district, centered around the downtown mall and bounded by Ferry Street, Washington Street, 15th Avenue

and the Southern Pacific Railroad, includes several old houses that will qualify for renovation loans if the committee's recommendations are approved.

Fiorato explains that once the city designates an area as a renewal district, it is eligible to receive tax increment funds — a portion of taxes reserved for civic improvements.

The current renewal district consists of the Eugene Mall and its immediate surrounding area.

"It's fairly small," Fiorato says. "There's not that much vacant land for building."

However, the proposed district boundaries have a number of corner lots available for high-density housing.

Rather than expand the current mall district, the committee decided to create a new one. That way, says Fiorato, the limited amount of funds available for existing and new projects will remain within the current district, while money generated by the proposed renewal plan will be spent only on projects in the designated area.

The renewal study won't be concluded until the end of August, Fiorato says, but before the proposal is passed on for approval, a public meeting will be held Aug. 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the city council chambers.



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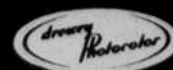
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