

Bid to save Amazon units fails

Lori Bettineski
Oregon Daily Emerald

Plans to demolish Amazon Family Housing units are now under way after University Housing officials rejected an outside purchasing bid made last month.

In an effort to save the low-income housing units from demolition, Amazon Community Housing, Inc. submitted a bid to the University to buy and renovate the aging units on December 7. Terms of the sale required them to provide a certified or cashiers check in an amount not less than 10 percent of the total bid (\$500,000) and an equivalent land exchange.

Because Amazon Community Housing, Inc., did not meet those requirements and was the only bidder to submit a proposal by the deadline, the University has since filed for a permit to demolish the complex.

"We (Amazon Community Housing, Inc.) were disappointed by the University's decision, but we weren't surprised," said Sharon Millman, an Amazon tenant who wrote the purchase proposal. "The really sad part about all this is that the University is setting the clock back 10 years or more on low-income housing efforts here in Eugene. After all the work the city has done, now we're just treading water and not moving forward at all."

According to Mike Eyster, director of University Housing, replacing the old Amazon units with new, energy-efficient structures will add to the current University housing capacity and ensure its viability in the future. Eyster said a reconstructed Amazon complex would add capacity for 81 families to the University's housing stock.

The University plans to replace Amazon with a new 280-unit complex in two phases.

The first phase for redevelopment is at the south

end of the site. The area was vacated gradually during the 1993-94 school year in order to minimize disruption to students' families and the impact on the local rental market. The replacement units in this first phase are anticipated to be ready for occupancy by the fall of 1996.

Demolition on the second phase is anticipated to start in 1996, and new structures are expected to be ready for occupancy by the fall of 1997. University housing officials anticipate a two-bedroom apartment at the newly developed complex will rent for approximately \$400 a month, although Millman and other tenants at the unit are skeptical.

"They can say \$400, but unless they have something up their sleeve, that isn't what the costs will really be," Millman said. "It will cost at least \$200 for maintenance and operation and \$355 for loan and debt services. Obviously simple mathematics put the actual cost at \$555, not \$400."

"If the University had accepted our purchase bid last month, the rent would have been between \$300 and \$350," Millman said. "Now a lot of the tenants are looking at having to leave school because of the increase in prices."

The Historic Review Board is reviewing the University's demolition permit application and will reveal its findings during a special hearing scheduled for January 19. Eugene city staff indicate the board may delay issuing the permit up to 120 days but cannot deny the permit.

Terry McDonald, director of St. Vincent DePaul has been talking to city officials about the possibility of purchasing the units and moving them to another site, instead of allowing the University to demolish the historic housing units after officially receiving the permit.

McDonald could not be reached Tuesday for further comment.

Students set for regional College Bowl

Gayle Forman
Oregon Daily Emerald

"What is the sin of money lending called?" came the question. And though University student Holley Powell didn't know much about the technical names for religious sins, she somehow knew the answer. "Usury," she replied.

In February, Powell, a graduate student in political science will join four other knowledgeable students representing the University in the regional College Bowl competition at Linfield College. Powell will be joined by Tim Blackman, Drew

Mirante, Peter Rayls and John Watson in the competition. The five students will flex their intellectual muscle and show their prowess of trivia along with contenders from around the Pacific Northwest.

Powell got together a team of people "just for fun." No one studied, sweated or took things too seriously, but nonetheless, Powell's team — an off-campus team — advanced to the play-off round, where they competed against teams from the dorms and off-campus residences. Her team lost in the playoffs, but Powell showed such a knack for

knowing the unknown that she was chosen to be on the all-star team.

Drew Mirante was one of the dorm know-it-alls who was hand-picked for the all-star team. He represented Carson Hall in the preliminary rounds where he answered questions with his vast reservoir of trivia knowledge. "It's stuff you can get off any Trivial Pursuit box," he said.

The true trivia was Mirante's speciality. "I answered the questions that no one else knew," he said. "The stuff that doesn't matter. Too bad you can't major in that."

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