

Westmoreland: Several potential buyers show interest in purchasing property

Continued from page 1

sage to buyers that the sale is not secure.

The real estate market

Frohnmayr said after the meeting that several potential buyers have come forward in the past few days. He would not say who, but he did confirm that one was a non-profit organization interested in low-income housing.

When presenting the University's proposal to sell the property, Frohnmayr cited the need to improve the residence halls and the need to be able to buy property closer to the University as the "once-a-century" opportunities arise.

He cited the UO Foundation's purchase of the vacant Joe Romania car lot east of the University-owned Williams' Bakery site on Franklin Boulevard as an example. Had it not been for the foundation, the property may have been sold to another buyer because the University did not have sufficient funds for the purchase and would have to go through an extensive process to secure bonds, Frohnmayr said.

"We cannot afford to be that un-nimble in this kind of market," Frohnmayr said.

Frohnmayr said after the meeting that he hopes to build a land bank in the east campus neighborhood along Franklin Boulevard that will serve as the legacy of his administration.

"It's my dream," he said.

Financial factors

Frohnmayr told the board that the University will be helping Westmoreland tenants financially in their search for different housing, though he emphasized that such a search may not be necessary if the buyer of the property continues to operate the apartments.

"We will be prepared to make some portion of the sale proceeds — if it should sell — available in order to mitigate the financial need," Frohnmayr said. The Westmoreland property has been valued at \$15 million to \$18 million.

Julian Catchen, president of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation,

stood when Frohnmayr mentioned possible tuition waivers for international students who may be displaced if the property sells and said they already get free tuition.

All graduate teaching fellows receive free tuition as a partial payment for their work duties.

"You're allowing the University to testify again and again," Catchen told the board as members told him he had already had his chance to speak and ordered him to sit down.

During his testimony, Catchen criticized the University for not involving students until after the decision to try to sell the property was made.

"The University has been rushing this issue from the beginning, and the beginning was two weeks ago," Catchen said.

Catchen expressed concern that no one from the University has said what exactly the sale money will purchase, saying he fears it will be used "for something completely unrelated to housing," such as property for the basketball arena the University hopes to build.

The negative effects the closing of Westmoreland will have on the people who live there is not worth any future property purchase, he said.

Frohnmayr told the board that the sale has nothing to do with the arena, which, if built, will be paid for by private donations to the Athletics Department.

University officials say that parcels of property surrounding Williams' Bakery, the site for the potential area, will be purchased if an arena is built.

Frohnmayr said after the meeting that the University will not seek out those properties until it is definite that a sports arena will be built because condemnation is an act of last resort. But if the current owners offer them for sale, the University will jump at the chance to purchase them, he said.

Senior Vice President and Provost John Moseley said in an interview Oct. 26 that the parcels of property, which include a 7-Eleven store and a dentist's office, have been estimated to cost about \$2 million.

International students

Catchen said 150 of the University's 1,350 GTFs live at Westmoreland and that no community in Eugene has as much ethnic and cultural diversity.

Graduate student Joe Christison berated the University for botching the number of international students who hold leases at Westmoreland when officials first announced their hopes to sell the property.

"Is it lies or are they really just as ignorant as they appear?" he said to the board.

An Oct. 20 news release said 25 international students hold leases at Westmoreland. The University has since concluded that the number is actually 87.

University Housing supplied the original number. University Vice President for Finance and Administration Frances Dyke and Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and Director of University Housing Mike Eyster realized the number was probably wrong after tenants challenged it during a meeting Oct. 26. The Office of Institutional Research checked every leaseholders' official record to come up with the new number.

GTF Darlene Hampton told the board that the Chinese Students and Scholars Association claims 80 percent of its members live at Westmoreland.

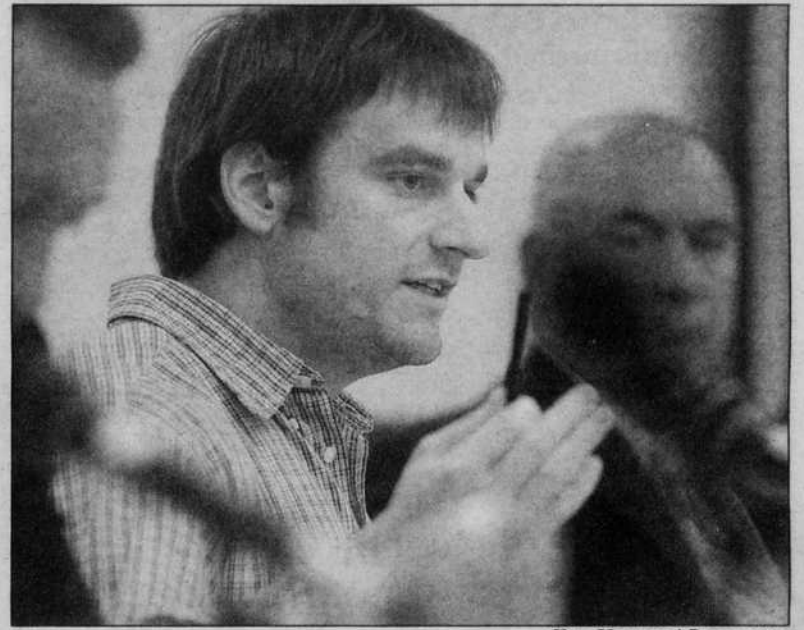
Lawmakers get involved

Numerous city, county and state officials have written letters to the University and to the board criticizing the University's process for pitching the sale and questioning how the University will help the hundreds of students who could be displaced.

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, wrote a letter to the board on Thursday asking that it require the University "to develop a plan that will ensure that there will be sufficient affordable family housing available."

Lane County Commissioner Bill Dwyer, Eugene City Councilor Bonny Bettman and Sen. Bill Morrisette, D-Springfield, submitted letters stating similar concerns.

Rep. Phil Barnhart, D-Eugene, spoke during the public comment section of the meeting, saying that as long as the



KATE HORTON | PHOTOGRAPHER

President of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation Julian Catchen speaks to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education Friday in Portland. He protested the University's plans to sell Westmoreland Apartments, where he said 150 GTFs reside.

board was confident the University was taking the necessary steps to help tenants who may be displaced, he does not object to the University moving forward with plans to sell.

Lane County Commissioner and Democratic candidate for governor Pete Sorenson arrived near the end of the meeting and spoke with students about their concerns and about what can be done. He will be writing a letter to the board within the next few days, he said.

"My first observation is the process really stinks," Sorenson told students. "It's really unfair."

Sorenson hopes to set up a meeting between University officials, students and government officials to discuss the possible sale and allow students a chance to further discuss their concerns.

"They heard from you today one time," Sorenson told students. "We're not done."

Board, student reactions

Though higher education board members questioned the University's efforts to help students find other housing as inexpensive as Westmore-

land, no one overtly objected to the University's desire to sell the west Eugene property in order to buy property adjacent to the campus.

"This is an entirely rational and reasonable proposal," board member Howard Sohn said.

ASUO President Adam Walsh, an Oregon Student Association board member, spoke about the possible Westmoreland sale during OSA's allotted speaking time and said afterward he was pleased board members spent time questioning the process for pitching the sale and demanding more be done to help tenants who may be forced to move.

"It's nice that this wasn't some sort of rubber stamp process," Walsh said.

Residence Hall Association President Todd Mann said though the meeting's outcome definitely wasn't ideal, it was encouraging to hear board members show skepticism about the overall proposal.

"If we grab a hold of that, I think there is potential to make the case for Westmoreland," Mann said.

Contact the news editor at mcuniff@dailyemerald.com

Journey Through Darkness

The Oregon Humanities Center and the Wulf Professorship in the Humanities present

The Company She Keeps: One Woman's Journey through the Dark Side

A LECTURE BY

GEORGIA DURANTE

AUTHOR, STUNT CAR DRIVER, AND FORMER MAFIA GETAWAY DRIVER

Tuesday
November 8, 2005
7:30 p.m.

180 Prince Lucien Campbell Hall
1415 Kincaid Street
University of Oregon

This lecture is free and open to the public, and is made possible through the generous support of Evelyn Nelson and Robert F. Wulf and the Wulf Professorship in the Humanities. For more information, or for disability accommodations, please call (541) 346-3934.



UNIVERSITY
OF OREGON

EO/AA/ADA institution committed to cultural diversity

Career Center
DREAM IT. PLAN IT. DO IT.

Corporations, Non-profit Organizations
and Government Agencies seeking

ALL MAJORS

CAREER FAIR

Thursday, November 10 • EMU Ballroom • 2:00–7:00pm

Career Success
Seminars

MAKING THE MOST OF THE CAREER FAIR

Presented by Clarise Wilsey

Tuesday, November 8

EMU Alsea Room, 4:00–5:30pm

Visit the Career Center web site to preregister

Career Center 220 Hendricks Hall • 346-3235 • <http://www.career.uoregon.edu>