

McDonald's hopes could be fried at Wednesday's rezoning hearing

By Sandy Mohr

The restaurant that does "it all for you" may be "done for" on the UNL campus before it opens, if opposition to rezoning of the land it wants to occupy is successful.

Last month, McDonald's Restaurants signed a contract with Nebraska Bookstore transferring ownership of the lots at 1319 and 1325 R St. The contract is hinged on whether the land is rezoned from residential to commercial use at a 2:30 p.m. Wednesday hearing.

At the hearing before the Lincoln City Planning Commission, at least three groups, UNL included, will send representatives to protest rezoning. The Commission is an advisory body and will make a recommendation to the Lincoln City Council. The council then will consider the recommendation next week.

UNL Assistant Business Manager Ray Coffey said he is preparing materials to present at the hearing. Coffey said he expects to testify for UNL against rezoning.

Rezoning the lots would be "incompatible" with a long-range plan adopted by UNL in 1967, Coffey said. This plan provides for a southern boundary of the university at Q or R Sts., with the land along those streets being used for buildings "such as a performing arts center," he said.

Persons interested in the opposition movement will meet tonight at 7 at UMHE Commonplace, 333 N. 14 St.

This meeting, according to UMHE member Kathy Cook, is to "see who's going to be speaking" at the hearing so they can be organized enough "to make a good impression."

Cook, a junior pre-nursing major from Lincoln, said members from St. Marks-on-the-Campus Episcopal Church at 1309 R St., UMHE, the University Day Care Center and the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity at 1345 R St. probably will be at the Monday night meeting.

There is no official committee working against the rezoning, she added.

Father Brent Bohlke of St. Mark's said he is against the rezoning because of what he called traffic and litter problems it might present. The traffic would be bad for the 10 to 15 pre-school aged children who attend the Kinder Day Care Center in St. Mark's church, he said.

Cook said she opposes the rezoning because it would be "aesthetically displeasing" to have something commercial across from the university.

Larry Doerr, UMHE campus minister, said he thinks the traffic a McDonald's might cause would be dangerous to pedestrians, and that a commercial establishment is "inappropriate" between a church and a living unit.

Two members of the UMHE Operating Council will testify at the hearing Wednesday: Council Chairman and UNL Modern Languages instructor Bill Brown and associate engineering Prof. Don Pierce, a council member.

In addition, Carol Broman will represent People for Children, an organization of parents using the University Child Care Center, said Mary Jo Ryan, director of the center.

Ryan said she thinks ASUN President Jim Say also may speak at the hearing. Last month the ASUN Senate passed a resolution asking the Lincoln Planning Commission and the City Council to oppose rezoning the R St. lots.

In addition, the Interfraternity Council, composed of the presidents of all UNL fraternities, unanimously passed a similar resolution last Wednesday.

Officials of McDonald's Restaurant's regional office in Kansas City have indicated they will not have a representative at the hearing because they think the rezoning issue should be taken care of by Nebraska Bookstore Co., since the contract with the company is contingent on approval of the rezoning.

Jack Sharpsteen, corporate officer of Nebraska Bookstore Co., said Sunday that he does not know of anyone with his company who will be present at the hearing.

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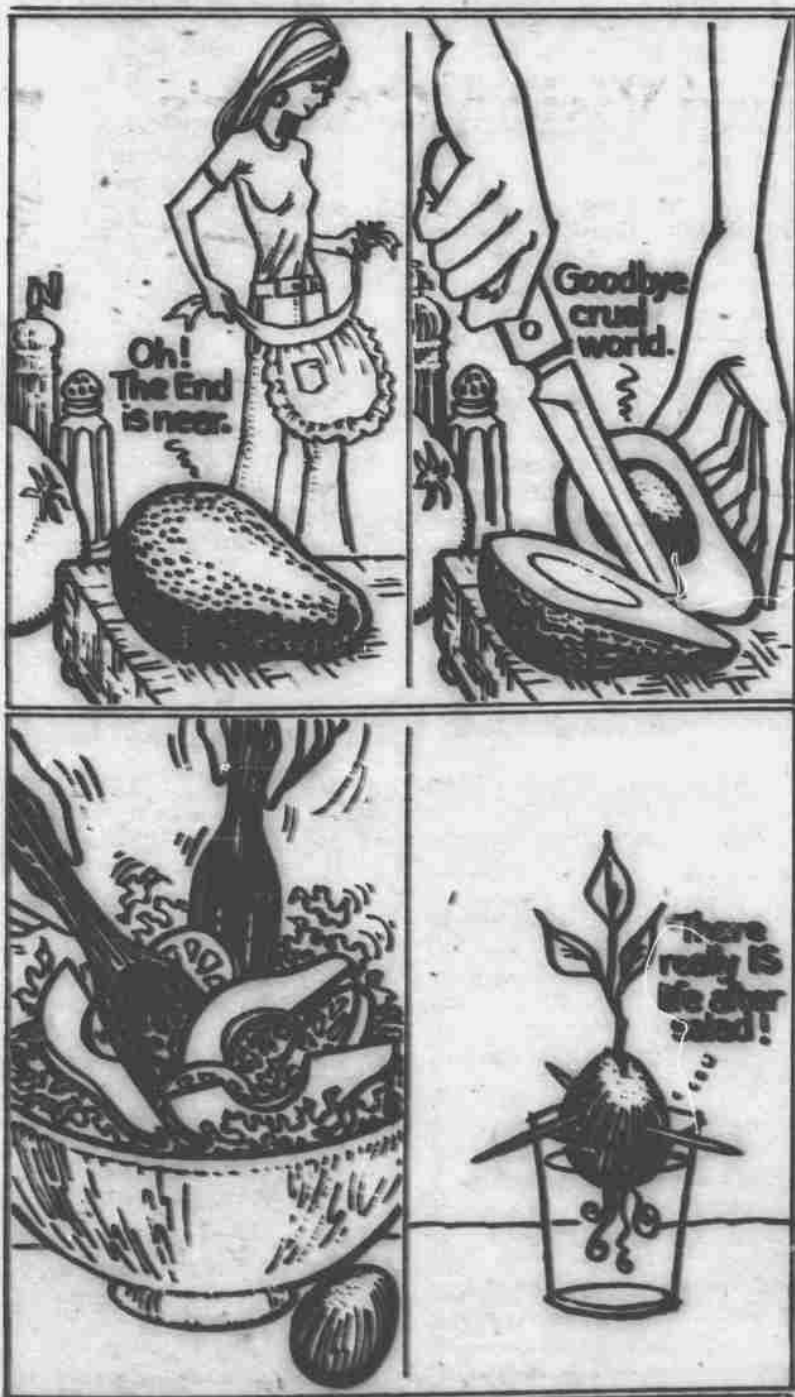
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