

Downtown declared blighted

By Ad Hudler
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Lincoln's City Council has passed a resolution declaring both sides of O Street from 17th to 27th streets "blighted and in need of redevelopment."

By passing the resolution, city officials hope to promote development in the area, City Councilman Bill Danley said.

When city governments declare areas as blighted, they can give tax benefits and breaks to developers, thus encouraging development.

No one spoke against the resolution at Monday's meeting, but two people showed support for it.

Saying the area was "in need of revitalization and strengthening," Stan Meradith of the law firm Davis, Fenton, Stang & Darling, presented the council with a study that described the O Street situation. The study, conducted by the Lincoln Urban Development Program, showed that of the existing 183 buildings in the blighted area, 113 are deteriorating. The report also showed that only three blocks reported population increases between 1970 and 1980.

Councilman Joseph Hampton also supported the resolution, saying "it is a positive way of supporting downtown."

"I whole-heartedly support it," he said.

The council first authorized funding for the project about six months ago.

"By then it was pretty well a consensus that we wanted to declare the area blighted," Danley said. "Once we commit the funding, we've pretty well decided that the area needs to be considered."

About 10 percent of Lincoln is blighted, including "most all of downtown," Danley said.

The old Cornhusker Hotel on 13th Street was considered blighted before contractors built Cornhusker Square in its place.

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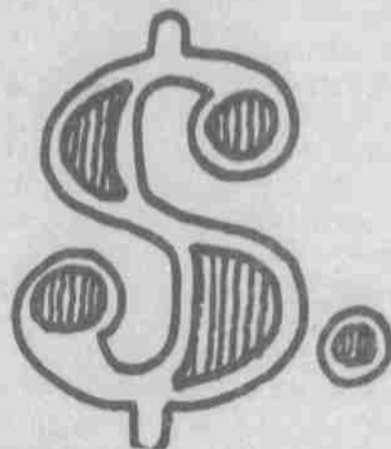
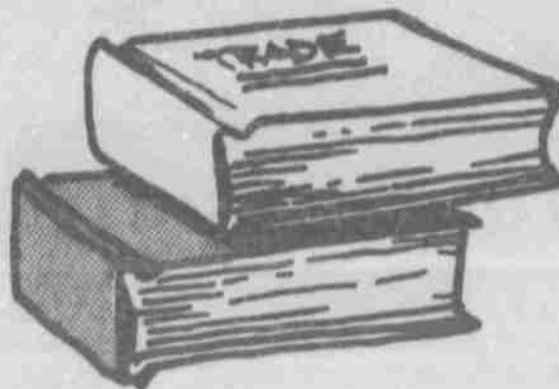
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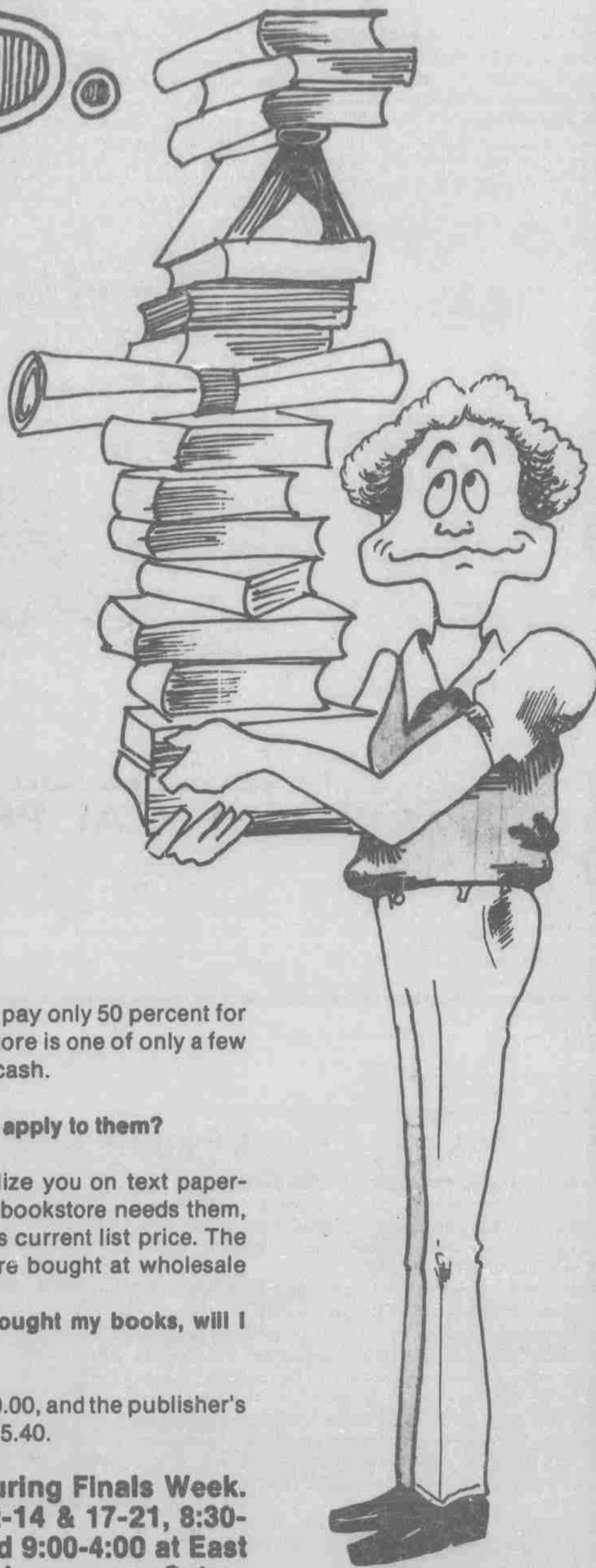
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