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This Week:
Live ghosts. —Page 4
Recruit plays two sports. —Page 6
Silly rabbit. —Page 10

Officials to stamp 'fight-ending' agreement

By Victoria Ayotte
Staff Reporter

An inter-local agreement between the city of Lincoln and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that will be signed Friday represents the end of fighting over the Malone neighborhood boundary, two UNL officials said.

John Goebel, vice chancellor for business and finance, said there's been lengthy discussion over the years to bring the city and the university to agreement.

Kim Todd, a campus landscape architect, said for a long time UNL was as "the bad guy" in the Malone dispute. The Malone neighborhood felt that UNL was trying to "gobble up" all their land, Todd said.

Work on developing a long-term boundary began with the Northeast Radial Reuse Task Force, which oversees the Malone neighborhood.

UNL also developed a plan for coping with the land, she said.

"The problem with the other plan was that it was two plans," Todd said.

UNL and Lincoln both have the right of eminent domain over their properties, "so we have to agree," Todd said.

Goebel said the problem was a lack of clarity with regard to the boundaries.

"You have to remember that the university had set its boundaries a long time ago and so had the city," Goebel said.

There hadn't been sufficient dialogue between the two, Goebel said.

Fourteen months ago, the Malone Redevelopment Study Committee was formed, which was made up of two representatives of the city, the university, the Malone Neighborhood Association and the Malone Center. Goebel was one of the university's representatives.

Although the plan's development took longer than intended, what resulted is a plan that will work because all parties involved had a part in the decision-making, Todd said.

"The fighting is over," she said. "The animosity and hard feelings are over."

"There will no longer be those decisions made without the knowledge of the other," with this plan, she said.

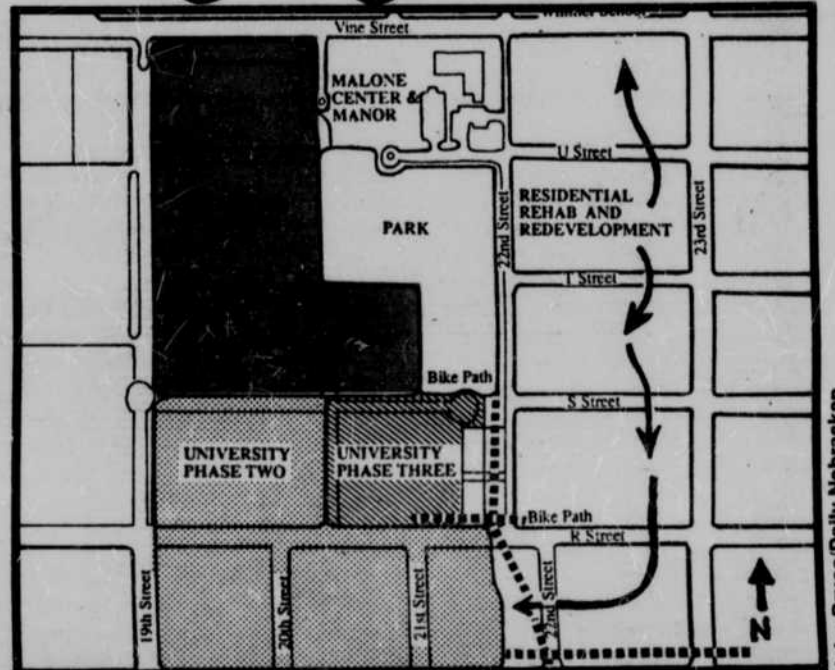
Goebel said this is a good plan because of the "excellent mixture" of people who worked on it, even though he said it took a long time to get the issues resolved.

"It was a genuine consensus," Goebel said.

The plan has two parts: a land-use plan and an implementation plan.

The Malone Center and manor will remain on the block they are on now,

See MALONE on 3



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

Workshops attack communication barriers

By Deanne Nelson
Staff Reporter

Foreign teaching assistants and University of Nebraska-Lincoln students must look to each other and themselves before all communication barriers can be destroyed, according to several UNL T.A.'s.

"We can learn from each other," said Ling Lu, a Chinese T.A. in the department of chemistry.

Now foreign T.A.'s have another way to learn. They can attend one of four three-week summer workshops at UNL. These workshops concentrate on various language, cultural and teaching barriers, said Robert Furgason, vice chancellor for academic affairs.

The language barrier begins overseas when foreign students take English language classes that do not emphasize actual speaking, said Gholam Mirafzal, another T.A. in the chemistry department and a native of Iran.

The workshops can help these foreigners by teaching them American slang and accents, Lu said. When students in China learn English, she said, they are taught by British-accented instructors, making it difficult for them to understand Americans when they come to the U.S.

"The first time I heard someone say 'It's cool,' I didn't know what that meant," she said.

Mirafzal said that even though students cite language barriers as the biggest hindrance to learning, barriers are usually caused by different customs and backgrounds.

"Workshops with instruction on American culture and teaching methods, which many foreigners have no idea about, can be very helpful," Mirafzal said.

"Some T.A.'s have problems in adjusting to American customs, but they have to acknowledge that this can be educational for both themselves and for the students," Mirafzal said.

This learning can also be two-fold in relation

to the class. Lu said that in her lab teaching she listens to the students and their corrections of her English. She uses "their way" the next time, she said.

These problems and others can also be remedied, or at least lessened, Mirafzal said, by T.A.'s actions. If these foreign students would "interact and socialize outside of class," then these barriers would fall as their English and awareness of American culture improved from interaction.

Mirafzal, recipient of the 1987-88 Distinguished Teaching Award for Teaching Assistants of the College of Arts and Sciences, stressed that it is not all the foreign T.A.'s fault, either.

"Sometimes when students aren't performing well, they blame the T.A.," he said.

Mirafzal said T.A. shyness is a big factor in blocking communication, especially in recitations where T.A.'s speak to the class for long periods of time.

Candidates to be T.A.'s must pass a spoken language test that serves two purposes.

"The spoken test is good because it shows if they don't have a good command of the language and if they would be shy in the classroom," he said.

If T.A.'s conquer their shyness, they can make students feel comfortable and increase communication, Mirafzal said.

"If you show the students you're willing to teach in and out of class, then they will be willing to learn," Mirafzal said.

He said one of his main goals as a T.A. is to "bring the students who are academically down up again."

"These are the students I give the most attention to, and they are the ones who give me the most appreciation and experience," he said.

Furgason said students can also reap rewards

See T.A. on 3



Connie Sheehan/Daily Nebraskan

Lu



Connie Sheehan/Daily Nebraskan

Mirafzal