

Editorial

# Educate yourself to speak out for, against LANE4's plans

As you can see in today's Q&A with City Manager Steve Schinker, the City Council expects to hear proposals from LANE4, the property management group hired by the city to "revitalize" Campustown, in late February or early March, in which they're expected to ask the council to be willing to use its power of eminent domain to acquire properties from owners who might be unwilling to sell their Campustown properties.

Much like the position we, as a staff, were in around this time last year, when it came time for senators to vote to support the Cyclone Cinema proposal, we realize we haven't gone far enough in putting information out to educate the community about the goings on of the plans to "revitalize"

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Campustown. Starting today — and until LANE4 makes its presentation to the City Council — we're committed to providing you with the information you need to become active in a citywide conversation surrounding the company's proposals.

But we're going to take this opportunity to call our community's leaders to do the same. City Council members Tom Wacha, Jami Larson, Riad Mahayni, Matthew Goodman, Peter Orazem and city staff owe it to the city, its student-residents, and its Campustown business and property owners to raise the level of commu-

nication with those who'll be affected most by the project. Jeremy Davis, who represents Campustown's residents, property owners and business owners on the City Council, Mayor Ann Campbell and ISU President Gregory Geoffroy owe us more than the rest. And, representing the student body's interests in official capacities, Matt England, the student body's ex-officio representative to the City Council, Luke Roling, the GSB president, and our respective senators owe it to the student body to be clear and straightforward about what — exactly — this project will entail. Because it will

involve sacrifices for many in the hope that we'll reap the rewards of a revitalized business district across the street from Central Campus at the project's completion.

And that request is going to involve the aforementioned taking on personal responsibility for making sure that the community is educated to the best of their abilities. Because our only goal is to have a conversation in the community about the proposal and to get that conversation started.

It won't be good enough for President Geoffroy to assume that Jeremy Davis is taking care of communicating with Campustown's business owners.

And it won't be good enough for GSB's senators to assume that Matt or Luke are taking care of

representing their constituents' interests to LANE4, the City Council and President Geoffroy, as plans move forward. We might very well lose the Chicha Shack, Headliners, Project 20/20, El Patron, Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches, Grandma's Attic, Cy's Roost, Fighting Burrito, Asylum, Mickey's Irish Pub, Copyworks, Mayhem Collectibles, U.S. Bank, Birthright, Domino's Pizza, India Palace, Ames Progressive, Joy's Mongolian Grill, Planned Parenthood, Little Taipei, Kum&Go, Pizza Pit and Welch Ave. Station, among many more. All of us need to pay attention.

To prepare to speak up — in support or in opposition — for LANE4's plans.

So, please, take notice.

LANE4

# Residents must formulate opinions

By Jason Arment@iowastatedaily.com

People of Ames, please take note. You have roughly 30 days to formulate an opinion about the proposed renovations to Campustown by LANE4. Sometime at the end of February the city council will meet and hold an open forum to discuss whether eminent domain is on the table when it comes to incentives that can be offered to LANE4. LANE4 is seeking assurances that when it comes time to build, they will not be hindered.

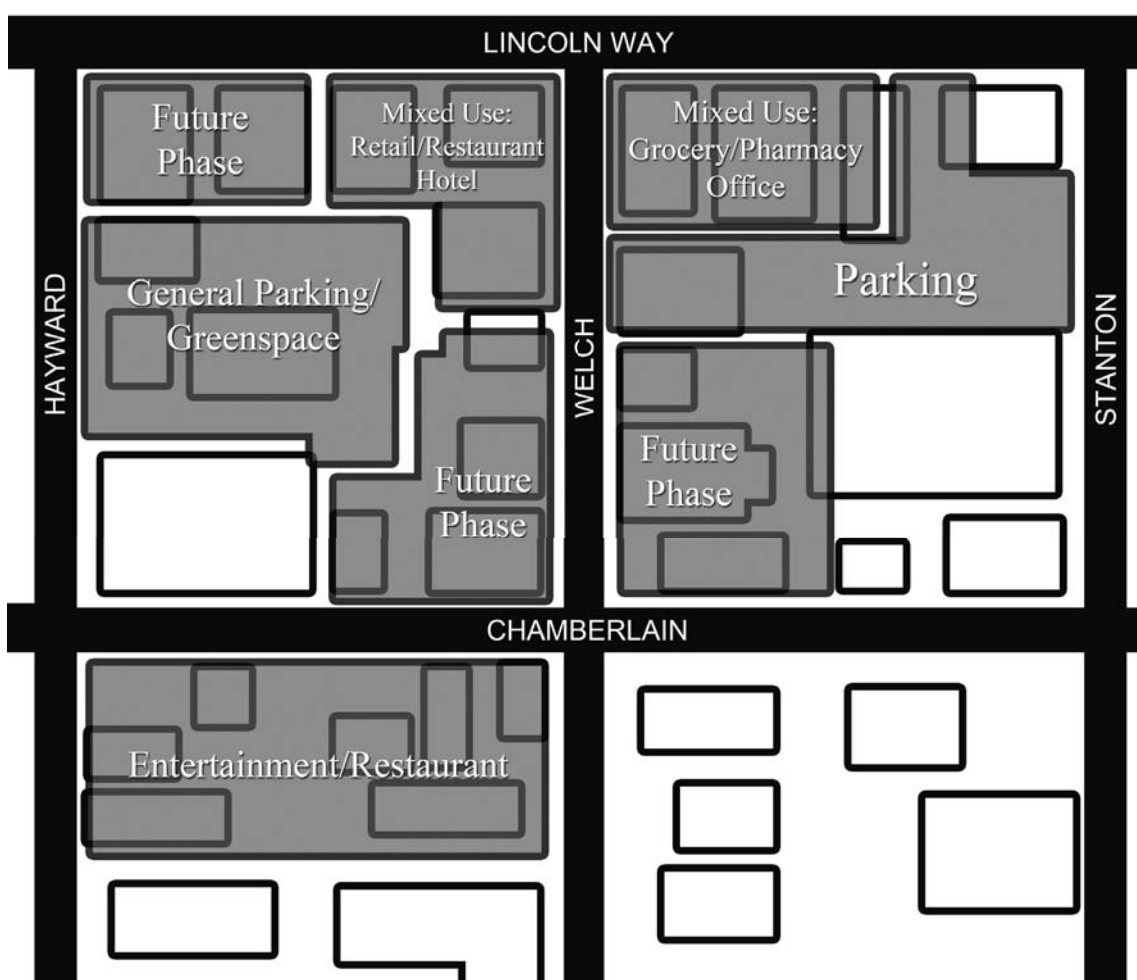
Let me make very clear that I am not trying to vilify LANE4 as a company. My thought process is this: LANE4 provides a service. They are simply trying to do something the city council expressed interest in having done. To me LANE4 is a tool, something that exists only because of its utility. It is up to the community to tell its leaders whether or not LANE4 should be undertaking this project at all.

What project? You might have just asked yourself that. Many of you have never seen the plans before, and that is something that I find very troubling. How can GSB accurately represent your thoughts if you have no idea what's going on? How can Iowa State know what you want?

Before very recently there were no startling developments. I simply thought the free market would either allow or deny LANE4; that is, property owners would either move, or they would not, and LANE4 would have to deal with it if they didn't.

Now that eminent domain has been put on the table as a possible incentive for LANE4, things change dramatically. If you aren't familiar with eminent domain, I'm about to break it down to its simplest definition: The government seizing land and paying fair market value for the land to the property owner.

Eminent domain has stipulations, however. For instance, the seizing is supposed to be for the good of the community. An easy example of this



Property group, LANE4 is looking to develop Campustown. LANE4 is working on renovations in other places in Ames, but the Campustown facelift is of main focus for students. The blocks indicate areas LANE4 plans to revitalize. All plans are still subject to change. Graphic: Aaron Hewit/Iowa State Daily

is seizing land for roads, but it can be used for other projects.

The Supreme Court ruled in *Kelo v. City of New London* that the city can use eminent domain to seize land for economic development that is for the good of the community.

Don't think that this means if a land owner challenged a decision to use eminent domain that they would have no chance in court.

I haven't had the chance to read the case in its entirety just yet, or much of the verbose opinion about it

from others.

What I can tell you from my preliminary glances is that the United States Supreme Court looked closely at the plans that were being proposed.

An interesting part of the court's opinion in *Kelo v. City of New London*, as written by Justice Stevens, reads, "We emphasize that nothing in our opinion precludes any State from placing further restrictions on its exercise of the takings power. Indeed, many States

already impose 'public use' requirements that are stricter than federal baseline."

Maybe at some point in the future Iowa will set a new precedent regarding eminent domain that has the names Ames, LANE4 and Campustown somewhere in the mix.

The paradigm that existed where people could choose to stay where they were changed when I found out "eminent domain" was indeed being discussed as a prospective incentive for LANE4.

The idea of owners not selling is not a hypothetical one. I was told by Rob Josephson, co-owner of Mayhem, that his landlord, Dorus Haynes, would not be selling her property. I have also heard from other businesses that their landlords will not be selling either, but they were not willing or confident enough to go on record saying this.

This means that, barring property owners changing their minds and selling, eminent domain will be necessary for LANE4 to go forward as planned.

You need to start thinking right now. Start thinking about your opinion.

I know, some people seem to just have their opinion. Believe me, though, the best opinions are well examined, and have their metal tested regularly.

I'm not saying that there aren't arguments for LANE4's Campustown renovation being a good thing. I will be going over some of these in future columns.

What I'm saying is that you need to become interested right now, this very second.

If you are a freshman and decide not to go to the open forum that will be held by the city council to air your opinion, don't complain in three years if things aren't the way you would like them to be.

The governing institutions of Ames want to have an open discourse concerning what the students want. I know this because this was communicated to me when I spoke with Steve Schinker, the city manager.

Things are more complicated, and that is what I am trying to convey. I will be back to examine many aspects of LANE4, believe that.

The utility of this column is to get you to start thinking, to galvanize you, to prepare your thought process to be orated in front of men at the city council meeting at the end of February.

Renovations

# Redevelopment plans aim to create lively atmosphere

By Rick Hanton@iowastatedaily.com

I think many students at Iowa State might agree with me that Campustown could use a facelift or at least an infusion of useful daytime businesses. We at the Daily were informed that many years ago, Campustown was more than just bars, music venues and sandwich shops. There used to be interesting daytime stores and small businesses in Campustown that opened before noon. The Campustown redevelopment plans are simply aiming to recreate this family and student friendly area that formerly existed just a stone's throw from Friley Hall.

The proposed changes for the Campustown area on Welch Avenue make me think of the summer I spent studying in Brunel, on the west side

of London. The interesting thing about living in Brunel, like many small towns in Europe, the town was built for walking. We could walk to get groceries, I walked into town to buy a soccer ball one day, and if we wanted to go out to eat, we walked there.

Right now if you live in Campustown, you are an equal distance from either Hy-Vee and you probably have a bus or car to get there. If you want to go browse some small shops you have to go to Main Street, another bus ride away. But, if you want to go to bars, you have more than enough options right on Welch Avenue. The city and university have been pushing to redesign Campustown so that

we have the amenities we need as students nearby within walking distance. The planned grocery on Welch Avenue will go into competition with the C-store in the Union Drive Community center, which will give all the students in the area more choices about where they can find snacks and food for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Having more parking should make Campustown a more lively area, allowing people from outside Iowa State to enjoy the shops and bars alongside students. There will be newer, better-designed buildings on Welch so you won't have to deal with bars retrofitted into existing space, sometimes with bathrooms the size (and condition) of outdoor port-a-potties.

I admit there are many great businesses that currently reside in Campustown. Everyone needs to realize that LANE4's plans for the area are still very preliminary. I'm hoping that some of the businesses in Campustown are able to work with the developers to maintain a presence there in the future. Nobody is yet being pushed forcibly out of the area and even if some businesses decide to sell, they could rebuild elsewhere in town.

With the upgrade of Campustown, it would be really cool if we get businesses of the caliber of Olde Main or Buffalo Wild Wings on Welch Ave. in the future.

Major change like this always is tough. I know I have a very specific

picture of Campustown in my mind and LANE4's vision is much different from my own. Without higher-income businesses in Campustown, there is not money to fix up the buildings, but without the area being fixed up and redesigned, new businesses won't come in. If LANE4's plans succeed, both parts will be accomplished at the same time.

I urge you to learn more about the plans for the development project, and to get in contact with city council members to express your thoughts and any concerns about the project. I'm sure they will consider the thoughts and needs of students as they make their final decision to approve or disapprove LANE4's development plans.