

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING ON TREE REMOVAL ALONG LINCOLN WAY AND WELCH AVENUE

BACKGROUND:

City staff was approached about the trees surrounding the Kingland Systems property and the need for these to be removed to accommodate the construction of the new building. The first phase would remove six trees on Lincoln Way and three trees on Welch Avenue. The second phase is the removal of an additional three trees on Welch Avenue (see attached map).

The process for removing a street tree is contained in Section 27.3 of the Municipal Code. If a tree is not being removed due to being a clear and present danger, then City staff must follow the procedure outlined in this section of the Code. This section requires that the tree be posted for 15 days, during which citizens can file a written objection to the removal with the City Manager. If no objections are received, the City Manager can then cause the trees to be removed. However, if an objection is filed, then a hearing is held before the City Council. The Council can sustain the objection, or can cause the trees to be removed if deemed to be in the City's best interest. The trees proposed for removal were posted in accordance with this ordinance and a date was set to receive objections. The attached written objection was received on the removal of these trees.

The demolition and future construction of the Kingland building foundation will require excavation to occur to near the curb line adjacent to the Kingland property. One of the concerns raised was that any vaults that had been filled in under the existing sidewalk would need to be completely removed in order to accommodate the new foundation. Heavy construction equipment will be used to accomplish this work in limited space. This and the subsequent above-ground construction activities will negatively impact the trees even if they are not removed at this time.

It is important to note that the Minor Site Development Plan has not yet been approved for this site. The request to remove the trees stemmed from the need to demolish the existing buildings, which can be done through a demolition permit and does not require an approved site plan. It should also be noted that tree removal in this area was discussed by the Campustown Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, and may be presented as an optional project with that future report.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the removal of the trees posted and shown on the attached map as Phase 1 Removals in accordance with Municipal Code Section 27.3.

Under this option, the Council could instruct City staff to explore replacement of the trees as part of the site plan approval process.

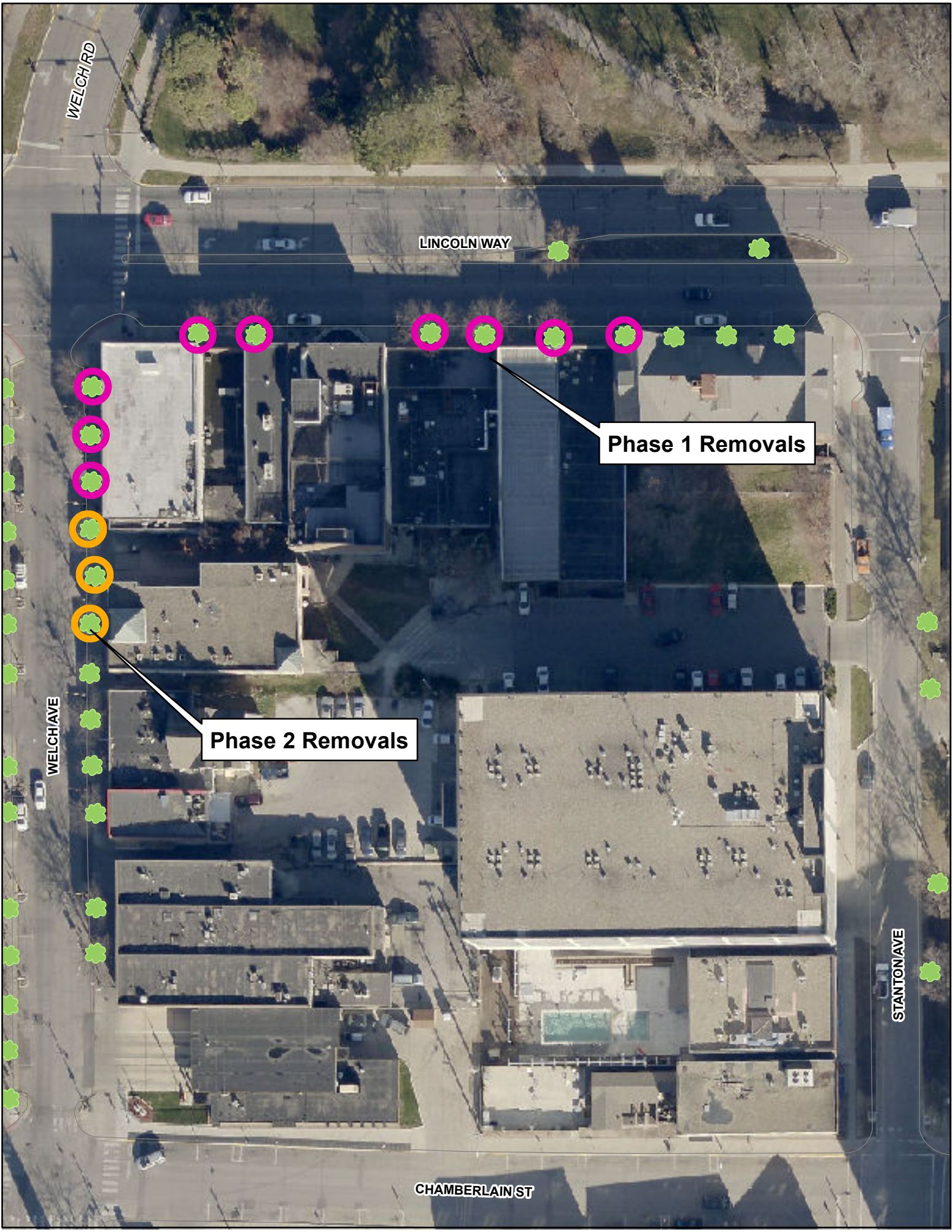
2. Do not approve the removal of the trees at this time. It should be noted, however, that the trees may later need to be removed by the developer if they are destroyed or ultimately die due to stress caused by the demolition and construction processes.
3. Do not allow removal of trees.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Trees are a valuable resource and the cited Municipal Code section is in place to protect this resource. However, in this case the amount of impact from construction excavation will likely impact the trees negatively, which will likely result in dead and/or hazardous trees. **It is important to note the site development plan has not been approved, so the site development plan approval process could provide an opportunity to reestablish trees or other appropriate landscaping to offset the loss of the existing trees.**

Assuming that it still remains a priority of the City Council to facilitate the redevelopment of Campustown, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the removal of the trees posted and shown on the attached map as Phase 1 Removals in accordance with Municipal Code Section 27.3.

The City staff can make sure that consideration is given to replacing the removed trees with trees or other appropriate landscaping as part of the Kingland site development plan approval process.



WELCH RD

LINCOLN WAY

Phase 1 Removals

Phase 2 Removals

WELCH AVE

STANTON AVE

CHAMBERLAIN ST

28 February 2014

Mr. Steve Schainker
City Manager
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, Iowa

Subject: Removal of trees on Welch Ave and Lincoln Way in campus town

1. I am objecting to the removal of the trees from Welch Ave and Lincoln Way in campus town.
2. It is my impression from speaking with Mr. Pepper (point of contact for the City), that the reason for their removal is the presence of some underground rooms (vaults) from an earlier era that extend from the basements of some buildings out under the sidewalks . The presence of these underground rooms would interfere with the foundation of the planned new building(s). Removal of these rooms apparently requires the removal of the trees.
3. I can understand the necessity of removing specific trees that interfere with the construction of the new building but not of those trees that do not pose a problem i.e. those located in areas where there are no underground rooms (vaults). The City should only permit the removal of those trees that would interfere with the elimination of the underground rooms (vaults), and not remove trees that would simply be a convenience for the developer.

Respectfully submitted



Kenneth B Platt
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