

# European-style cafe approved

## Lynn OKs beer, wine license

**LYNN**

**By James Haynes**

THE DAILY ITEM

Suspending a standing aversion to alcohol licenses into Lynn's downtown, the City Council unanimously approved a beer and wine permit for restaurateurs Steven Feldmann and Marie Feldmannova, paving the way for Lynn's first European-style café.

The Gulu-Gulu café, offering premium beers and wines, as well as the works of local artists, wireless internet and occasional music and film engagements, is hoping to open its doors in the Keith Building in Central Square in February.

Approving the license appeared a major shift for some council members and community leaders. Crime Watch organizer Dorothy Mylin gave the proposed establishment her blessing, despite a consistent opposition to alcohol licenses downtown, an opposition shared by councilor Tim Phelan.

Council members, however, were lavish in their praise for the proposed café, modeled after a defunct ex-pat and local watering hole in Prague, complimenting Feldmann's business plan, and viewing the proposal as a positive result of a 2003 decision changing zoning requirements in the city's downtown area.

"When the rezoning was passed, this was what we had in mind," said City Council President James Cowdell.

Council enthusiasm for the venture is, perhaps, unsurprising. With sights set on the disposable income and loft-ier tastes in food, coffee and tipple of the younger business professionals and recent influx of Dual Income-No Kid condo dwellers in the city center, Gulu-Gulu's business plan

dovetails neatly with Lynn's ongoing efforts at revitalizing the downtown.

Lynn's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation gave the café a \$50,000 business loan.

"When they changed the zoning laws here, they were trying to get people like myself to move up here, and what a lot of us found when we got up here was that there weren't a lot of places to go," said Feldmann, a web developer with an MBA and experience in the food industry.

"I'd always planned on doing something along these lines. I hadn't planned on doing it specifically in Lynn. But once here, I saw a real market opportunity and I started looking into it and seeing if it was something we could do without losing our shirts. I brought the business plan to EDIC and they took a look and really liked it, and the rest will, hopefully, be history."

Cowdell also hopes so. Presiding over the council during a period of downtown growth unparalleled in his lifetime, Cowdell is hoping Gulu-Gulu is the tip of a very large commercial iceberg, a renaissance of Lynn's city center ushered in, in part, by zoning change.

"That's my baby. I sponsored the rezoning, and I'm very proud of that. We currently have 180 units being developed in the downtown area. It's bringing in people with disposable income, and (Gulu-Gulu) is a direct result of that," said Cowdell.

"You've got bodies back in the downtown, and that spurs demand for restaurants and, hopefully, other types of business. At one time there were 13 movie theaters in this city, and I'd love to see one back in the downtown. I think all of this is very positive, and hopefully will continue."