



City board approves downtown developer

Group will pitch campaign to property owners

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WATERBURY — The Board of Aldermen agreed Tuesday to sign a preferred developer deal with a Long Island group to revitalize the city's struggling central business district.

With that approval, Renaissance Downtowns will start a 10 to 16 month process of creating a plan to turn the downtown into a thriving, vibrant mix of high-end living units, shops and public spaces.

"We want to be the next chapter of your story," said Renaissance President Donald Monti at the end of an hour long presentation. "Let us show you what we're about."

One of the major components of that planning process will begin in two weeks when Renaissance meets with private property owners in the targeted area to entice them to join its campaign. The vote gives Renaissance the city's stamp of approval, which could help the company's standing while negotiating with downtown property owners.

If the city likes the Renaissance plan, it can convert that vision to a binding project agreement. If not, the city has the option of sending Renaissance packing, at no cost to tax payers.

Some on the board expressed concerns. Alderman Lawrence V. DePillo complained about being forced to vote on a contract without having enough information about Renaissance.

Over the course of the last year, Renaissance has sent reams of paperwork about its track record and plans for the city to Waterbury Development See **DEAL** , Page **5A**

>> List of the key points of the deal,

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DEAL: Some criticize approval of developer

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Corp, the city's semiprivate development arm.

But aldermen didn't get that kind of information, DePillo said. He was especially concerned about the myriad of limited liability groups and management companies linked to Monti.

"As much as I want to see downtown succeed, I can't vote for the deal because I just don't know enough about their company," DePillo said during a break in the meeting. "I needed more."

WDC executive director Leo Frank told DePillo that his staff had "fully vetted" Renaissance and had received glowing comments from people who had worked with them in other communities.

Frank reminded the board that Waterbury was not on the hook by signing this deal. The city will have plenty of time to "get to know" Renaissance before it commits to anything, he said.