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DEPOT SQUARE

Bristol Council OKs Negotiating With Developer For Downtown Site

By KEN BYRON

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BRISTOL —

The city council has approved a plan to negotiate a redevelopment deal with Renaissance Downtowns LLC for the city-owned Depot Square site.

The council voted unanimously Tuesday to work with the Long Island-based developer. The Bristol Downtown Development Corp. has already approved the arrangement.

Renaissance has presented plans to build 750 apartments and condominiums and 60,000 square feet of retail space on the 17-acre site.

Mayor Arthur Ward said the downtown development corporation and Renaissance have 120 days to work out an agreement. The city's corporation counsel will represent the council in the negotiations.

"I anticipate it will be a year and a half before we see a shovel in the ground, although I hope sooner than that. Yesterday would be great," Ward said. "But I'm very happy. Considering how the economy is doing, I think this project is progressing pretty well."

Depot Square, across the street from city hall on North Main Street, is the site of the old Bristol Centre mall.

The mall had been declining for years when the city bought the property in 2005 for \$5.3 million and tore it down. Since then, city officials have been looking for a company that would redevelop the site.

Renaissance approached the city after officials put out a request for proposals from developers last August.

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