

# The Bristol Press

## Vote for a housing type, Bristol Rising is told

Wednesday, January 18, 2012 11:10 PM EST

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BRISTOL — If you haven't voted yet for your favorite style of housing units for the Renaissance Downtowns Bristol project, Ryan Porter is hoping that you do so soon.

Porter, the project manager, told the group at Bristol Rising's monthly meetup Wednesday that the number of votes is lagging. In order to reach their goal of 400 votes, they expected to have 214 votes by now, but only have 179.

The online survey records one vote per person and offers eight choices, from micro-lofts to luxury town houses.

"These votes will prove to potential financiers that there is demand for the product," Porter said to the group of downtown revitalization supporters who gathered for the meeting at Nuchie's. "But I think that only having the survey up for three months with a goal of 400 votes was too aggressive. I'd like to extend the deadline to April 5."

Aside from that, the news was positive. Porter said the plans for zoning amendments have been submitted and are expected to be approved soon. They plan to have shovels in the ground before the end of the year.

Renaissance Downtowns plans to revitalize downtown with multi-use buildings on the former Centre Mall site, combining housing, restaurants, shops and entertainment into a walkable community.

Porter also said the building at 11 Summer St. is going to be demolished by June 1 and the owner hopes to have a new building there by the end of the summer.

The present building would need extensive renovations to be used again.

Discount Food Outlet is expected to close within the next two months. Once that happens, the building will be demolished and McDonalds will build a new building there, leaving the space it currently occupies along Riverside Avenue.

"We tried to work with the owners to help them relocate to no avail," said Porter. "But now we have someone who wants to open a grocery store in part of the former Tinty's."

A discount liquor store is now taking up part of the former furniture store on the corner of Memorial Boulevard and Main Street, but there is still space available.

There was also good news from another neighborhood group. Tim Bobroske of the West End Association, which he called a "positive spinoff" of Bristol Rising, said his group plans to host a daylong family event on Aug. 18 at Rockwell Park.

"It will be a fun time," he said. "We're trying to do something simple that will be a positive experience."

A fundraising dinner and spring cleanup are also planned for the coming months.

The West End Association hopes to renew interest in the west end of town, which has a substantial amount of low-income housing and few businesses.

Mark Walerysiak Jr., Renaissance Downtowns' community liaison, said that on March 7 a workshop will be held with retail and economic development expert Kennedy Smith. She will talk about marketing ideas for the five projects that got top votes on another survey.

These include a literary café and bookstore, a movie theater that serves dinner and drinks, an intimate live music venue and an Ale House and Wine Bar. The latter project has already found a backer. Victor and Terry Lugo hope to open the Barley Vine in the coming months at the site that Bare Bones formerly occupied.

They are asking for the public's opinion on snacks they should offer in a survey on their Facebook page. A new location is now being sought for Bare Bones in the hopes that it can spur interest in another neighborhood.

"We're taking the naysayers and turning them on their ear," said Bristol Rising member Fred Hull. "We're turning 'No, you can't,' into 'Yes, we did.' Let's keep it going."

What you can do:

Go to [www.BristolRising.com](http://www.BristolRising.com) or [www.GoBristolsurvey.com](http://www.GoBristolsurvey.com). Links to the housing survey are prominently displayed on both sites. The Bristol Rising site also has its latest survey, a name for the new Bristol Rising newsletter.

Sign up on both of the websites and make your opinion known.

Log onto Facebook and search for Barley Vine to find the survey on bar snacks. Offer your opinion on what you would like to munch on while drinking a craft beer or regionally-produced wine.

URL: <http://www.bristolpress.com/articles/2012/01/18/news/doc4f17924aa4476652537023.prt>

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