



# The Bristol Observer



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FREE

•Brit hopes to break 'The A Team' in U.S., Page 19

•Twice as tasty, two pages of Tasty Bites, Page 20

•Bristol Eastern wrestlers romp, Page 40

## Renaissance seeking regulatory changes

By KAITLYN NAPLES  
STAFF WRITER

Even though Bare Bones has vacated its space on Main Street, the downtown plans are still progressing and Bristol Rising is still working its way towards a better city center.

Renaissance Downtowns, the developer for the Depot Square site, is currently in the process of getting zoning regulations approved so it can continue on to its phases of development. The developer presented nine recommendations to the city's Zoning Commission and Planning Commission recently, all of which have been through a public hearing, with the exception of one, just for language explanation. The developer is expected to go back to the city's Zoning Commission for another public hearing on the sixth amendment, which would allow for some buildings to change structure on the second floor, so it isn't exactly the same as the first.

Another amendment would allow for ground housing in mix-use buildings, on non-key streets. Project Manager Ryan Porter said streets like Center Street, Federal Street and others that surround

the downtown, would be able to allow ground level housing.

"Retail wouldn't survive back there," Porter said. Other recommendations include changes in parking structures downtown, to allow more spots, which include angled parking.

Once the zoning public hearing completes, Renaissance then will apply for special permits. Porter said the timing will work out well because the developer should get the special permits it needs while McDonald's is being relocated.

Discount Food Outlet was given its 90-day notice at the beginning of the year, to vacate its property so McDonald's can start building its new facility. DFO has until about mid-March to vacate the space, Porter said. At a recent council meeting, Porter had announced that the developer has been talking to other grocers about possibly opening up downtown. During the time between DFO closing and a new grocer opening, Porter said the current owner of the former Tinty's building is considering opening up a grocery store, and Mayor Art Ward See DOWNTOWN, page 4



MIKE CHAIKEN

Miss Forestville's Outstanding Teen Kellie Lacko, left, organized Divas for the Dive, a group of local pageant title holders, who participated in the Penguin Plunge to help Bristol Special Olympics Sunday. The group raised \$1,300. Miss Greater Plainville's Outstanding Teen Allison Owsianko, right, was among the members of Divas for the Dive.

## Icy water, warm hearts

The annual Penguin Plunge to benefit the Special Olympics of Connecticut was held early Sunday morning at Winding Trails in Farmington. There was a considerable Bristol presence at the event as participants dived into the cold January waters in exchange for monetary pledges for SOCT.



MIKE CHAIKEN

Bristol's Audrey Sullivan, left, and Brian LaFountain rush for the shore after diving in the water. This was Sullivan's third plunge.

## High school field projects scaled back but not abandoned

By KAITLYN NAPLES  
STAFF WRITER

Athletes in the district may eventually be able to play games outside at Bristol Eastern High School. The Operations Committee, of the Board of Education, recently approved a motion to move forward with fundraising to put permanent lights on the field at Bristol Eastern High School.

What was once a project that called for raising money to construct two

artificial turf fields, one at each high school, has now been scaled-back. The money that will be used for the lights will be completely fundraised, unless state grants become available. No Board of Education money will be used for this project.

"A lot of work and research was done," on the original project, Superintendent of Schools Philip Streifer said, however, in the end, the fund raising "was problematic," he

said. "This is a lot more doable."

The original project was calling for \$4 million, which would have been for two artificial turf fields, at both Bristol Eastern and Bristol Central high schools. Streifer said the down-sizing of the project wasn't because of Bristol Central's lack of motivation, but because realistically, Bristol Eastern is further along in the development process.

Currently, Bristol

Eastern has the field, handicapped accessible bleachers, a concession stand, bathrooms and other amenities that Bristol Central is lacking.

The Operations Committee did not completely write the original project off, but just considered the lights at Bristol Eastern would be a "phase one" in the process, which is expected to cost about \$200,000.

"There is still an inter See FIELDS, page 4

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