

Council to consider leased parking plan

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer

3/27/85

A plan to convert free downtown parking lots into leased parking will be considered Monday by the Rapid City Common Council. But proposed changes in parking meters have been returned to a merchants group for more study.

Anna Marie Thatcher, president of the Downtown Association, presented that group's plan for downtown parking to the council's public works committee Tuesday.

The Downtown Association proposes turning six of eight city-owned lots into leased parking for people who work downtown. The association also suggested changing time limits on city meters to either three or five hours.

Under the plan, the city would add about 300 meters downtown.

The metering proposal was criticized, especially by business people on Quincy Street.

Alderman Lisle Owens, who lives on Quincy and who also owns rental property there, objected to installing five-hour meters on the south side of Quincy. No meters are there now and he said his renters would have no place to park.

"I approve of what you're doing (in general)," Owens said. "But you're sure hurting me."

He said the plan to increase time limits on the north side of Quincy Street from two to three hours would be inconvenient for Public Library patrons.

Another Quincy Street business person said, "You'll run us out of business with three- and five-hour parking."

Thatcher replied, "None of this is set in concrete. Some of the specifics could be changed. We just want to get something done."

The Downtown Association's parking

committee will study the metering proposal and resubmit it.

The public works committee sent the leased parking plan to the full council with a recommendation for approval, but only in lots the city owns now. The Downtown Association had also proposed leased parking at two lots the city hopes to buy.

The recommendation was unanimous, but one committee member expressed reservations.

"Have you taken into consideration downtown (apartment) renters?" asked Alderman Karen Means. "They would have to look at this as a raise in rent."

Thatcher replied, "There is no such thing as free parking. Somebody pays for it. They (renters) could lease space, like anyone else."

Alderman Baron Glassgow said stricter enforcement of parking regulations would help solve the problem. Fifty percent of city parking tickets go unpaid, he said.

Thatcher said the Downtown Association is studying several changes to parking ordinances. "We're looking at the way Denver and Chicago (enforce parking rules). It may not be the most popular ordinance," she said. "But enforcement is part of our problem."

In other action, after a report by a city engineer, the public works committee recommended that the city prohibit rollover type curbs in new developments.

Rollover curbs are rounded and, unlike standard L-shaped curbs, don't need to be cut down at driveway entrances. Developers say rollovers are less expensive, but city engineers report drainage and parking problems associated with them.