Shoppers thread their way through outdoor tables, planters and benches in downtown Rapid City on Wednesday. Those items, along with the sidewalk signs that many downtown businesses use to welcome shoppers and advertise specials, are actually illegal under current city ordinances.
Downtown: Meeting planned

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uses an A-frame-style sidewalk sign to advertise entertainment. She figures she gets twice as many customers when the sign is out.

Caprile also urged the committee to develop a permit and guidelines for street performers to avoid future problems.

“I’d like to encourage downtown street performance,” she said. “It adds to the atmosphere.”

Alderman Ann Bush said the beautification and historic preservation committees should look at the issue of structures in the right of way. So should the fire department. “It could also be a safety issue,” she said.

Alderman Stan Petrik was leery of allowing sidewalk signs. “Next thing you know, we’ll want to display our wares out on the sidewalk,” he said.

In the end, aldermen agreed that Brad Solon of the city Building Inspeccion Department should meet with downtown business owners, the Rapid City Historic Preservation Commission and the city Beautification Committee to come up with a plan to resolve the issue.

City ordinance will have to be changed to make the signs legal.

Meanwhile, in response to a question from the audience, city officials said the sign boards probably could stay in place while a solution is developed.

Petrik disagreed. “Do what you want,” he said. “We make rules, and then we sit here and say we aren’t going to enforce them. Why are we making the dang rules?”