By Emilie Rusch

John Brewer’s sudden departure from Destination Rapid City last week won’t derail the proposed special tax district or public plaza at the heart of the organization’s plans for revitalizing downtown, supporters of the project said.

Opponents, though, are hopeful the change in leadership could provide the pause in momentum they need to convince the organization to get more input and consensus on the future of the city’s central business district.

Brewer had been president of the nonprofit economic development corporation since its creation in July 2008. But Brewer, who had been interim president, was named interim president of the board when John Brewer announced his resignation last week.

Dennis Halterman, owner of The Factory Salon on St. Joseph Street, said that under Brewer, Destination Rapid City was never interested in taking input from everyone. Halterman, along with Alderman Aaron Costello, has formed a new group, Citizens United for a Better Idea, which hopes to propose a more comprehensive district-wide approach to downtown revitalization.

“There was a small group of people that came up with a plan for a huge area and said our plan has to be the plan and never allowed any input from the larger community,” Halterman said. “If the organization wants to continue to exist as a small group of people that aren’t even elected, that’s not right.”

New leadership, though, provides a chance to make things right with downtown property owners, Halterman said.

“The opportunity is, to make a sports analogy, whenever one coach leaves and another comes in, you hope you become a winning team.”