

City: BID opponents have enough signatures for vote

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05-04-10

Journal

Rapid City voters will decide the fate of the downtown Business Improvement District in a special city election June 29.

The Rapid City Council set the special election date at its meeting Monday night, following a report from city finance officer Jim Preston that enough signatures had been turned in to refer the council

action to a citywide vote.

A Monday count by city staff found that 3,356 of the signatures turned in Friday by opponents of the downtown BID were completed correctly, out of a total of 3,503 submitted. The opponents needed 2,070 valid signatures to force a citywide vote.

The city council in April unanimously voted to create the special tax district, which will raise about \$173,700 a year to support the maintenance and operations of

the proposed Main Street Square public park at Sixth and Main streets. The \$6.5 million cost of building the park would be paid by private donors and sales tax collected in the city's Vision 2012 fund.

Opponents say the tax is unfair and that this is the wrong time to ask downtown property owners to pay more.

Challengers to the signed petitions have until 5 p.m. Friday to submit an itemized affidavit ex-

plaining why individual signatures are invalid, such as if they come from people who are not registered voters in Rapid City.

The special election will be the same day as any run-off elections required for Rapid City Council. The regular municipal election is June 8.

If approved, the district would be divided into two zones, with businesses in Zone 1 paying \$1.50 per \$1,000 assessed value and businesses in Zone 2 paying \$0.75

per \$1,000 assessed value. Zone 1 would include all properties bordered by Mount Rushmore Road, Omaha Street, Fifth Street and Kansas City Street. Zone 2 includes all commercial properties outside those boundaries between West Boulevard, Columbus Street and East Boulevard.

There would be a \$3,000 annual cap on total taxes paid on one piece of property.

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