

Council approves BID 5-4

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Staff Writer

A proposed downtown Business Improvement District (BID) was approved Monday night by the Rapid City Common Council, but support for the BID at times seemed lukewarm.

"I guess I, too, am a little uncomfortable with the unfairness of the tax," said Alderman Vivian Pappel, who voted for BID.

"I think it obviously gives a break to people with (businesses having) bigger square footages. But I don't think there's any tax we have that is fair, although there are some that are more fair than others."

The BID would assess downtown property owners and/or business operators 10 cents per square foot based on 100 percent of the structural space, with a \$2,000 cap per business.

The money — about \$185,000 a year — would be spent on business promotions, efforts to retain and recruit businesses, and for organizational expenses.

The council voted 5-4 to support the BID.

Aldermen Pappel, Joe Bailey, Ed McLaughlin, Dick Robinson and Carole Hillard voted for it, while Aldermen Delores Coffing, Harold Weiland, Don Kellar and Alvin Albrecht voted against it.

Alderman Gale Holbrook was absent.

The BID proposal next will come before the council as an ordinance which must be approved on first and second readings for a downtown BID to be created.

Opponents Monday night again said the straw vote of downtown businesses on the BID was unfair because it was not a secret ballot.

Others said the tax was not fair because the \$2,000 cap favored large businesses.

Alderman Bailey said property values in the downtown were depreciating and that the BID could help.

"I don't know that it will but you've got to start working together to turn around this situation," Bailey said.