First of three meetings set today to discuss proposed special district

The merits of a proposed special assessment district for Rapid City’s downtown will be debated at noon today during the first of three meetings.

The Downtown Development Corporation has scheduled the meeting at the Elks Theater. The second hearing will be noon Tuesday at the Elks, with the third at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday in the City/School Administration Center.

The proposed district could generate about $300,000 a year, funds that would be used to improve and expand downtown parking and landscaping, organize promotions, pay for a full-time maintenance crew, create a low-interest loan funds for building renovations and underwrite economic development efforts.

The tax would be paid by businesses in the 40-block area south of Omaha Street, north of Kansas City Street, east of West Boulevard and west of East Boulevard. Homes, churches and government buildings would be exempt.

The Rapid City Common Council must approve the district, which has been proposed by the Downtown Development Corporation. If passed, the assessment rates would be fixed and could only be repealed if 56 percent of the businesses in the district petitioned the city.

For more information on the meeting or the assessment district, contact Bryan Schnell, redevelopment director of the DDC, at 394-6036.