

# Council goes ahead with parking plans

**Bill Harlan**  
Staff Writer

The Rapid City Common Council voted Monday to proceed with a plan to charge for space at four downtown lots where parking is now free.

The council also approved, with two dissenting votes, an economic development bond for \$6.8 million to expand and renovate the Holiday Inn in Rapid City.

The Downtown Association proposed the plan to convert the parking lots to leased space to the council's public works committee last week. The association hopes that by leasing space to downtown businesses, employers and employees will be encouraged to park in lots, not on the street.

The plan includes lots at the corner of Main Street and Mount Rushmore Road, Seventh and Rapid streets, Sixth and Rapid streets and the St. Joseph Street lot between Fourth and Fifth streets.

The council voted to exclude from the plan the metered lot next to Rapid City Public Library.

Sharon Johnson, city traffic engineer, will study rates and construction costs for the leased lots and report to the council.

The original Downtown Association plan also called for changing rates and time limits on meters. It would have added about 300 meters to the downtown area.

The Downtown Association also suggested metering two Sixth Street lots, one at St. Joseph Street and one at Main Street.

Last week the public works committee sent all the parking meter proposals back to the Downtown Association's parking committee after several business owners objected to five-hour meters on Quincy Street.

The council met in secret session Monday, at the request of City Attorney

Ray Woodsend, to discuss plans for a downtown parking ramp proposed for St. Joseph Street, between Fifth and Sixth streets.

Woodsend said the session was closed to discuss "legal matters" related to the ramp. The city is negotiating with Wallace and Sylvia Olson to buy Laughlin Cleaners, 519 St. Joseph St., and also wants to buy land from several other landowners.

The council approved an economic development bond for Landmark Hotels, owners of the Holiday Inn.

Aldermen Keith Carlyle and Norma Thomsen voted against the bond. Thomsen regularly votes against the bonds, which she says she opposes in principle.

Carlyle said after the meeting he voted against the bonds because, "We can't fill the rooms we have." He said a study last summer indicated that tourism in western South Dakota has decreased the last two years.

He also said small motels are hurt when large ones, like the Holiday Inn, obtain low-interest money through development bonds. "It's an unfair competitive advantage," Carlyle said.

The council also approved a \$621,000 expenditure for the Community Block Development Grant Program. The expenditure includes \$521,000 in federal funds. The city contributes about \$100,000 through land sales and other income.

The block grant program includes \$100,000 for housing rehabilitation, \$250,000 for storm sewer construction, \$150,000 for street improvements, \$62,500 for an addition to the bike path, \$58,500 for salaries and administration and \$15,000 in "local options money," a catch-all category for small programs.

The council approved a permit for the Headstart Day Care Center on Monroe Street, contingent upon installation of smoke detectors and inspection of a boiler.