

Public works panel postpones decisions on parking plans, curbs

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The Rapid City Common Council's public works committee postponed decisions Tuesday on two major engineering policies and a parking plan, pending staff and committee reports.

The committee directed Sharon Johnson, city traffic engineer, to continue work on plans to convert four downtown city lots from free to leased parking.

Johnson reported Tuesday that gate systems for the four lots will cost about \$35,000. She said if the city metered the lots instead of leasing them, it would cost about \$20,000.

Johnson also recommended that parking fines be increased in conjunction with the sale of leases to encourage use of the lots.

The Downtown Association originally proposed leasing the lots to provide parking for downtown workers while leaving street parking for shoppers.

The committee also followed a recommendation of the city Planning Commission and postponed action on a rollover curb policy.

Developers prefer rollover to standard L-shaped curbs because the rollover type eliminates the need for curb cuts for driveways.

Developers say L-shaped curbs cost new home buyers \$300 to \$600 more than rollover curbs.

City engineers have opposed rollovers in many cases because of drainage and parking problems.

The Planning Commission Tuesday appointed a five-member committee of developers and commission members to study the city policy.

The public works committee also will study a new curb cut policy submitted by the city's engineering department. The policy would, among other things, standardize curb construction, driveway spacing and minimum sight distances from intersections and driveways.

In another matter, the committee heard proponents and opponents of a Falls Drive street and utility project.

Attorney Robert LaFleur, who represents three homeowners in the neighborhood, said his clients object to paying equal shares for streets and water because they have already provided both for themselves.

City engineers have proposed assessing property owners by front footage. LaFleur said an assessment based on benefits would be fairer.

Developers who plan to build at Canyon Lake Heights favor the frontage method of assessment.

The committee set April 30 as a hearing date for the project.

Several residents of Scenic Drive and Meadowbrook Drive complained that they had not been notified of a pending sidewalk project in their neighborhood.

City engineer Jerry Foster confirmed a sidewalk project is planned. The issue will be discussed at Monday's city council meeting.