

City takes first step toward removing parking meters

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In special session Tuesday, the Rapid City Common Council passed first reading of an ordinance to remove parking meters from the downtown area.

At the request of downtown merchants, the meters will be removed from streets and off-street parking lots within the two-hour limit area. The amendment also extends the two-hour zone on the east to the west right-of-way line on Fourth Street.

If the council gives approval Monday night, meters could be removed by about May 24 and motorists have "free" parking from Fourth Street to the east right-of-way line on Ninth and from Rapid Street to the north right-of-way line on Kansas City.

The two-hour limit, however, will continue to be enforced and fines collected for violations.

The hours of enforcement and the penalty for not paying the \$2 fine in three days also are changed. The present two-hour limit is in force from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. except on Sundays and holidays. The new ordinance calls for enforcement from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

If the \$2 fine is not paid within 72 hours, the penalty goes from \$3 to \$7 and if not paid within another two weeks, the fine in magistrates court is \$15 to \$19.

Alderman Bob Flittie thought the new penalty unreasonable but voted in favor when it was explained it would bring a little more into city coffers, to help replace lost revenue from the missing meters, and that it would serve as

an "expensive deterrent" to the habitual violators.

Alderman Norma Thomsen argued for an extra day to pay the basic \$2 fine but couldn't get a second to her motion to amend the ordinance. She voted in favor of the ordinance but later changed her vote to "No," for the record.

Removal of the meters from the city parking lot next to the Stockgrowers building will provide "all day" free parking but the two-hour limit will be enforced on the lot at Sixth and St. Joseph.

Although businessmen had asked for a 30-day trial period to see if they could get along without meters, City Attorney Ray Woodsend said the action contemplated by the council is "not a temporary thing." Amending the or-

dinance would be a permanent action unless the council followed the same procedure to amend it back, he said.

All other meters outside the central business district's two-hour zone will be enforced.

In other business, the council approved a final plat for Francis M. Moore for property in the 1900 block of 38th Street although the Planning Commission had recommended denial because one of the lots does not meet the 7,500 square feet required by city code.

Of the eight aldermen present, only Bill Tubbs voted against.

May 9 was set for hearing on an application by R. D. LaCroix to relocate his package liquor store in a new building about 50 feet from the old one at 615 E. North.