

Downtown area becomes public parking district

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Staff Writer

Rapid City's downtown area became a public parking district Wednesday when a protest petition failed to materialize.

John E. Morrison, president of Motor Service Co., 402 St. Joe, opposed the parking district and was circulating a petition in protest.

The protest petition, in order to kill the parking district, would have required the signatures of the owners of 51 percent of the property within the district.

Morrison did not file the petition but said he has enough signers from just his block, the 400 block on Main and St. Joe between Fourth and Fifth, to prove the "overwhelming majority in this block are opposed."

He said he did not have enough signatures to kill the project but enough to show the mayor and council there is opposition.

He said he is "not against what they're trying to do uptown, but I can see no reason why they brought it (the district) down to Fourth Street. It's going to cost me \$11,000 in 10 years that will do me no good."

Alderman Robb Swanson asked for a timetable on acquisition of property in the 500 block on the north side of Main, which is one of the projects approved for the district.

City Attorney Ray Woodsend said no action could be taken until the district became effective. Now, he said, he can prepare assessment rolls for property within the district to raise \$500,000 for acquisition and construction of six downtown parking lots. The total project comes to about \$1.2 million.

Woodsend estimated acquisition of private property might begin in 60 to 90 days after the council meeting March 6.

If any of the property goes into condemnation proceedings, there is no way to tell how long it will take, said Woodsend.