

Chamber committee okays parking district proposal

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A Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce committee has okayed Mayor Art LaCroix's downtown parking district proposal.

The Central Business District Beautification Task Force heard LaCroix's plan for helping solve the downtown parking problem without tying up parking meters for a 20-year bond issue.

The mayor again outlined the priorities for acquiring offstreet lots and the estimate of about \$875,000 costs for acquisition and development.

By establishing a parking district bounded by Ninth Street on the west,

Fourth Street on the east, the alley north of Main on the north and the alley south of St. Joseph on the south, an assessment at the rate of \$8 per front foot would raise approximately \$500,000 with the city funding the remaining \$375,000 from Community Development Block Grant funds, parking meter revenues and other city funds.

With the parking district vehicle, the city could remove parking meters from the present city-owned parking lots and all onstreet areas except for Main and St. Joseph. Meters are needed here for control of employee parking, said LaCroix.

Downtown merchants and property owners within the proposed district "can make it fly. But if the owners of 50

percent of the property within the district petition against the district, it would kill it," said the mayor, adding, "And I have no other viable solution."

LaCroix said however, he may not have the votes on the city council to approve the entire plan.

There is mixed feeling about acquisition and razing of buildings at Sixth and Main (the Sears parking area) and this is part of the package recommended by the Downtown Parking Board and the chamber's parking committee.

Top priority is the acquisition of the Sears parking lot including the property to Sixth Street. Along with this acquisition is the purchase of the Patton lot at Rushmore Road and Main.

Alderman Richard Goschke felt the

council is 100 percent behind 95 percent of the mayor's proposal, but is divided on the tearing down any more buildings.

The CDB Beautification Task Force gave its full support to the mayor's proposal, including removal of the buildings, and offered to revive the "block party" information sessions with all downtown businessmen and other interested persons.

Dick Robinson, a member of the Beautification Task Force, agreed to arrange for block party meetings next week or as soon as possible.

LaCroix said he intends to take his plan for the parking district to the full council Dec. 19.