

Association wants more meters removed

The Rapid City Downtown Association wants more parking meters removed from downtown and the city is willing to discuss the plan.

Vern Podlasek, president of the Downtown Association, told the common council's Public Works Committee Wednesday that instead of raising parking fines, which the city wants to do by changing an ordinance, it should take out remaining parking meters.

"Any fine of any consequence to a shopper is a detriment to shopping," Podlasek said.

The Common Council sought the Downtown Association's advice before approving an ordinance to increase parking fines from 50 cents to \$1. The increase would generate enough revenue to make the department self-supporting and pay expenses for letting violators mail in fines. The postage would be picked up by the city.

The city still uses 614 parking meters in what is considered the downtown

area but not the major retail center, said Traffic Engineer Sharon Johnson. In May, 1975, the city removed 275 meters from the main shopping district.

"Most of the council and myself have always favored taking out the remaining meters," said Mayor Art LaCroix.

Alderman Dick Goschke said downtown employees are major violators and constantly take up downtown parking spaces.

Podlasek agreed that was a problem but said employees of retail businesses are more careful than workers associated with other firms. He suggested that the rear portion of the new Sixth and Main parking lot be designated for day-long employee parking.

A meeting with the Downtown Association and city officials is planned within the next two weeks to discuss the various proposals.