

Downtown parking gets go ahead from city council

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Staff Writer

Condemnation proceedings to acquire more downtown offstreet parking were finally approved by the Rapid City Common Council Monday night.

But not before some changes were made.

The original proposal, given first priority by the Downtown Parking Board, was to acquire land west of the Sears store and west of the Sears service garage in the 500 block on the north side of Main. The proposal included buildings at the corner of Sixth and Main and the bus depot.

When the council finished arguing, the depot was the only building included in the condemnation. The present private parking lot at Mount Rushmore Road and Main, location of the old Patton Hotel, was included in acquisition in a separate resolution.

This is what Alderman Richard Goschke had proposed, despite the parking board's recommendation the Patton lot be given second priority and

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acquired only after the Sears lots had been acquired.

Goschke, and several other aldermen, opposed taking and destroying buildings at the corner of Sixth and Main because of the hardship caused tenants as well as owners.

He suggested taking money saved by not acquiring buildings and "spreading it through the downtown" for other offstreet parking, especially on the west end of the business district.

Strangely, after some downtown businessmen have been appealing for years to the council to do something about the parking problem, a couple of businessmen spoke out against it.

Otto Kaul of Music Monarch, 530 Main, said he feels the council is moving too fast. He didn't want to see Main Street become one big parking lot.

Larry Gortmaker of A & M Jewellery, 532 Main, wondered why some businessmen had not been solicited for private donations to help finance offstreet parking and what would happen to some \$70,000 already pledged or collected.

Roger Schneider, chairman of the parking board, said the fund drive was a chamber function and apparently some businesses were missed because they were not members.

City Atty. Ray Woodsend explained the money would be used to help pay off revenue bonds used to acquire the property

Estimated cost of acquiring both the Sears and Patton properties is about \$750,000 including buildings at Sixth and Main. No estimate of the cost for the new proposal was given.