

Property owner objects to use of land for downtown parking lot

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A downtown Rapid City property owner is objecting to having his land taken for a public parking lot.

John George, owner of the State Theater building, told the city council Monday night he is concerned about city plans to purchase five lots on the south side of the 700 block of Main.

The five lots mentioned, he said, would include his building and land. George said he feels there has been some confusion about these plans and he has not yet been notified of any intent to buy by the city.

Mayor Art LaCroix said the city could not make any offer until after the council had considered the resolution of intent which was up for consideration at the meeting.

Wording of the resolution was amended to permit the acquisition of other property if the first choice locations proved too costly or for other reasons.

The downtown parking board had recommended the city purchase the property at the southwest corner of Seventh and Main which included the Sweeney Bldg., the old Lariat Clothing building and the State Theater.

Also given top priority for acquisition is the north northeast corner of Sixth and Main which includes land and buildings west of Sears plus five lots on the north side of the alley.

The resolution of intent authorizes a revenue bond issue of about \$800,000. The bond issue would be paid from the revenues of parking meters and pledges from downtown merchants totaling \$125,000 over a five year period.

The city has completed development of the parking board's first choice for off-street parking. The new lot at the southeast corner of Sixth and St. Joe has been paved and stalls marked but meters have not arrived.

In a related matter, the council dis-

cussed the possibility of having an attendant at the city-leased lots at Fifth and St. Joe on Saturdays. The council had approved giving up these lots in February after the new lot a block west was opened.

However, the new lot has only 56 stalls while the leased land has 70 spaces on each lot and the council has been asked to reconsider its decision to give up the lease.

The mayor was reluctant to assign attendant duties on Saturday which would only add to the cost of an operation that already is losing money, he said.

The Public Works Dept. was instructed to make a complete study of the leased-parking and come up with a recommendation.

Off-street parking was an issue in another council action concerning a use on review.

Dr. A. J. Barrett, 902 Columbus, was granted the use on review so he can in-

stall a new X-ray machine. But the council tied on a contingency that the doctor post a bond until he provides off-street parking according to the code.

Barrett objected to having to put in a \$20,000 parking lot which he said is not needed for his patients. He has purchased property next door for a future lot, if and when it is needed, he told the council. But he does not foresee its need for the next year or two.

The planning commission had recommended denial but the council in a 7 to 2 vote approved the use on review contingent upon posting the bond.

Alderman Jim Kissel suggested the council take another look at off-street parking requirements downtown. The central business district zone does not require new buildings to provide for off-street parking which puts the burden on the council, he noted.

In general commercial zoning which adjoins the central district, off-street parking is mandatory for new buildings.