

City may revive plan to set up parking district

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Another effort may be made to establish a downtown parking district in Rapid City. A businessman was denied any relief from a special assessment. And the water main construction project on West Main will go ahead as planned despite some objections.

Discussion on these three non-agenda items took more than an hour of the regular meeting of the Rapid City Common Council Monday night.

Roger Schneider, chairman of the public parking board, recommended the council consider reviving the plan for the downtown parking district as a means to help finance more off-street parking. He also wondered why the council had not yet considered the parking board's recommendation to purchase the property east of the Duhamel building on the north side of St. Joseph Street to Fifth for public parking.

Of the half dozen potential spots downtown that were investigated and studied, the east end of the block on St. Joe seems to best provide an immediate solution, he said. It meets all the criteria established by previous planners, he added.

Schneider said the board is recommending using funds from the Parking Lot and Area Fund to make the purchase and said an informal appraisal places the property at about \$363,000. Any additional money needed could

come from future parking meter revenues, he said.

Mayor Don Barnett, however, said there is not enough revenue from the Parking Lot and Area Fund to buy the property and develop the lot.

Bob Apa voiced strong objection and predicted the downtown core of Rapid City will die, like it has in other towns when nothing was done. He said the only solution is for the merchants and property owners to get together and create a shopper mall. "People are tired of having to run out in the rain every two hours to move their cars," he said.

Both recommendations from the parking board were referred to the planning commission.

Lloyd Rypkema of Eddie's Tire and Glass appealed to the council to make an adjustment in a sewer installation project on property he owned in the Feigel Addition just north of the new Dodge Town auto dealership.

He said when he was first informed of the estimated cost, which he agreed to pay for himself, was about \$12,000. The actual contract awarded for construction, however, was \$17,884, which he said he thought about for a long time before accepting. Then, when he got his bill it was \$19,905, which he was protesting.

Bill Abernathy, public works director, explained the additional amount was for engineering costs and fiscal

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agent fees. It is standard to add these to the construction costs on all assessments for public projects, said Abernathy.

Rypkema said he was never advised of the additional costs and thought the figure quoted for construction included all other costs.

Jim Kissel moved to make an exception in Rypkema's case, because of an apparent misunderstanding, and that the city not assess the engineering costs of about 6 per cent.

The vote was split 5-5 and Mayor Barnett cast the tie-breaker, voting against although earlier he had asked the council if there was some way Rypkema could be given some relief.

On the West Main project, Barnett told the council he has received some objections from "both sides of the gap." The project is a water main replacement from Canal Street to Jackson Boulevard and will block traffic on West Main for a few days starting next week.

The objections apparently were from businessmen who questioned the timing and wondered why the project had to get underway during the heavy holiday shopping season.

Abernathy explained the background and said the contractor was given the notice to proceed in early November. The work must be finished in 180 calendar days.

Robert Powles, manager of construction on the project for Utility Engineering Corp., explained that West Main will be closed only for five days starting next Monday from Canal Street to Jackson Boulevard while the major ditching is being done.

During the remainder of the project, traffic will be open on West Main on two lanes at a time. He also pointed out the detour is on West Boulevard and Mountain View to Omaha, all four-lane thoroughfare.

He assured the council that his crews will work through the weekend

to get West Main re-opened to limited traffic within the time schedule.

Utility Engineering has the contract to replace three small water mains that have plagued the city with frequent breaks because of deterioration, with a 20-inch asbestos-concrete line.

The council took no action to delay the project.