

Parking ramp, fire hall, library site plans interwoven

SEP 16 1970

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A decision will be made within the next 10 days or two weeks on whether the city will continue its interest in the former Black Hills Oldsmobile-Cadillac building for use as a combined fire barn and police department.

This decision will have a bearing on the possibility that the proposed new municipal library can be built on the present city-owned parking lot on Quincy Street between Sixth and Seventh streets, behind the garage building.

Some aldermen feel that if the city purchases the garage building, it will also need a sizable portion of the south half of the block for parking purposes.

Mayor Jack Allmon told the airport and public buildings committee of the common council Tuesday afternoon that he would attempt to have cost figures on remodeling the garage so that the council can make a final decision.

In the meantime, the library

board will be forced to mark time in its search for a suitable site for a new library which will cost an estimated \$900,000. The board anticipates a square footage of some 30,000 feet.

Also entering into the library site picture is the Downtown Parking and Traffic Committee of the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce which is insistent that present parking not be relinquished to the library board without some agreement on replacement parking.

At a meeting earlier this month, the chamber committee adopted a three-fold resolution aimed at resolving an impasse that had developed over the library site. First, the chamber committee accepted the library board's offer to pay \$60,000 to gain possession of the parking lot on Quincy Street.

Second the chamber stipulated that 100 per cent of the city's parking meter revenues be used for development of off-street parking, commencing Jan. 1, 1971.

The resolution also said that
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planning and construction of two parking ramps, one on St. Joe and the other on Main Street, should begin immediately. Both lots would be owned and operated by the city.

Two sites selected for immediate study by planners would include the area from Sears store west to Sixth Street on Main, and from the National Bank of South Dakota west to Eighth Street on St. Joe.

Both ramps were envisioned as being built over new or renewed ground level businesses with most of the parking area on the second level and above.

The airport and public buildings committee Tuesday afternoon approved in principle the parking ramp concept and recommended that all parking meter funds, less the cost of salaries of meter men and meter maintenance, be earmarked for this purpose.

City parking and meters bring in an estimated \$80,000 to city coffers annually.

Whether the \$60,000 offered by the library board will go toward reimbursing parking meter funds will depend on the library and parking propositions moving ahead concurrently, as well as the pending decision on the former garage building.

It has been suggested that the library board settle for the city auditorium site for its new building, but space is limited and leaves no room for future expansion. The board is not keen on the idea of having to resort to a two or three-story structure.

At one point in the Tuesday discussion, a motion was made that temporary approval be given the library board to locate on the Quincy parking lot site, but this was withdrawn when it was pointed out that a decision should first be made on the former car garage.

Also noted by the library board was its need to have guaranteed possession of a building site before it could negotiate with a bonding company and order its architect to commence designing a building.

A consensus seemed to be developing toward resolving the library site question in conjunction with parking solutions by the end of the month.

In other business before the committee, a reminder was issued that the municipal airport would be closed to commercial jets beginning next Thursday, Sept. 24, while repairs and slurry seal is applied to the runway. Jets will be using Ellsworth Air Force Base facilities during the period of close-down.