Civic group ready for billboard fight

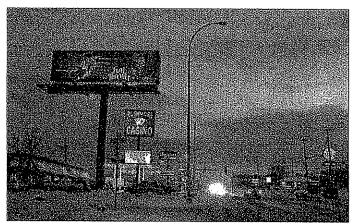
By Emilie Rusch Journal staff

The newly reorganized Mount Rushmore Road Group is gearing up to fight a proposed electronic bill-board near Wilson Park.

The Sign Code Board of Appeals will take up a request Wednesday from Lamar Outdoor Advertising to convert an existing billboard at 1808 Mount Rushmore Road to digital advertisements that would continue to exceed city size requirements.

Group president Debra Jensen said the last thing Mount Rushmore Road needs is a billboard larger

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Kristina Barker/Journal staff

Mount Rushmore Road Group is against a proposed electronic billboard that could replace a print billboard at St. Andrew Street and Mount Rushmore Road.

BILLBOARD: Only the north face would be digital.

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than what the city allows.
"What we're trying to
do is make the road more
attractive, more visitor

friendly, to improve the look for the community," Jensen said. "We feel, like most of Rapid City, that there are probably enough signs, particularly off-premise billboards."

The current billboard, located at the corner of Mount Rushmore Road and St. Andrew Street in the parking lot shared by Quiznos and a casino, is 378 square feet in size and 45 feet tall, building official Brad Solon said.

The city's sign code

If you go

What: Sign Code Board of Appeals

When: 7 a.m. Wednesday Where: Third floor east conference room, City/ School Administration Center

limits off-premise bill-boards to 250 square feet and 30 feet tall, rules that went into effect after the billboard was installed. Lamar is requesting a variance to allow the sign to stay at its current size.

"Whenever you ask to convert a billboard, you have to comply with all the current regulations," Growth Management Director Marcia Elkins said. "We've had a number of billboards they've brought into compliance."

Terry Olson of Lamar

Outdoor Advertising declined to comment Monday. But according to minutes from the Nov. 18 sign code meeting, Olson said the company considered downsizing the billboard to meet code requirements, a move that would have saved it considerable money as well. But because of visibility concerns, the sign needs to remain the current size and height so that passing motorists can read it. Only the north face would be converted to digital advertisements.

Lamar has offered to take down a billboard on Highway 79 in exchange for getting the variance for Mount Rushmore Road.

Jensen said the concession is a matter of apples and oranges. But a flashier

billboard on Mount more Road could he group's chances of ge beautification desig before it even applie road is scheduled for struction in 2014, a state, city and road have been working to to include some vist provements in the pro

"We're just in th steps of Mount Rus Road getting improve done," Jensen said don't want to do an to jeopardize it."

The billboard worequire a Planning mission and H Preservation Compreview, due to its localisms said.

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