

Broad Street losing parking

By Shaun Zinck szinck@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 4:00 pm

A majority of the Broad Street parking lot will be closed soon as work gets under way at the old Wagner Building on Grand Avenue in downtown Beloit.

Beloit City Council members recently approved a construction easement agreement with Hendricks Commercial Properties, the owners of the Wagner building, that allowed for the closure.

An easement was needed because there is no other place to store equipment during the demolition and construction of the project. About 25 parking spaces will be fenced off, leaving about 27 spaces available for parking.

Demolition is scheduled to start on Oct. 29, and the north part of the lot will be fenced off to hold equipment and contractor trailers for the project, which is expected to take about a year to complete.

Additionally, parking spaces in the front of the building along Grand Avenue also will be fenced off during the demolition and during some of the construction.

The closed lot is a main parking spot for downtown customers, and is expected to cause some headaches for store merchants and farmer's market attendees next summer.

"There is always some inconvenience associated with construction," said City Manager Larry Arft.

The parking lot also is used during snow emergencies to allow residents to get their vehicles off the streets to allow snow plows to remove snow. However, Arft said there still will be available parking to the north at the Mill Street Parking lot, and other city-owned lots around downtown available.

As part of the agreement, Hendricks will repair all damage done to the asphalt, lighting, curb or gutters during construction.

The city is anticipating damage will be done to the asphalt and delayed resurfacing the parking lot until 2013, Arft said.

The parking lot will be reopened when the city issues an occupancy permit, after construction is complete, or by Dec. 31, 2013.

Rob Gerbitz, President and COO of Hendricks Development Group, said the latest that demolition will start is at the beginning of November.

Arft said the city wanted to make sure the parking lot was available for the last weekend of the Farmer's Market before demo began.

Five buildings will be torn down to make way for a larger structure that will house residential

apartments and local businesses.

The top two floors will be reserved for Beloit College students, as long as the college board approves it. The trustees are expected to take up the issue during its April meeting.

Gerbitz said the company has already talked with several potential business owners that would be interested in locating in the building.

The company would like to see a restaurant built, however, the space could also be used for office space as well.