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### Forum on downtown Tuesday night

5/30/2005 11:00 PM  
(Rachel Barnhart, WROC-TV)



Rochester residents have long complained about downtown. No retail, no nightlife, no life.

Tuesday, you can weigh in on the problems and offer solutions at a public forum. But critics charge it's a politically-motivated event.

The forum, aimed at young people, is being put on by City Council's Center City Task Force. It's made up of Wade Norwood, who's running for mayor, Bill Pritchard, who's running to keep his seat, and Adam McFadden.

"It's obvious there's a lot of promotion of this by two people who are running for office," said Councilman Tim Mains, who's running against Norwood for the Democratic mayoral nomination. Mains said he asked to be part of the task force when it was formed last December, but he did not get a reply.

"We need to get people at City Hall out of this closed-door mentality and into a belief that everybody needs to be invited," Mains said. He supports the forum's goal of getting the community involved in discussions on downtown.

"This isn't politically motivated, but we're all politicians so who are we fooling?" said McFadden.

McFadden says the main purpose of the event is not to promote the candidates, but to help the councilmen set policy. He plans on asking the crowd whether bars should be allowed to stay open until 4 a.m., instead of 2 a.m.

"When you talk about competing with New York City or Buffalo, we just can't compete because of time constraints," McFadden said.

The ROC City Coalition, a group of 20-somethings and 30-somethings dedicated to improving city life, helped promote the event. Member Jeremy Clooney, who's active in

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Democratic city politics, says there's no political motivation, and everyone is welcome.

"It is political because you have three politicians in the room, but the real focus of the event is to have one on one questions from young people to the current policy-makers, members of the Center City task force, about downtown issues," said Clooney. "We talk about retaining the brains in the area. Well, this is a chance for policy makers to understand what young people are looking for."

The forum is at 5:30 p.m. at Soho East (the former Tonic nightclub,) 336 East Ave. Other topics to be discussed include wireless Internet, housing, safety, panhandling, and anything else the public brings up.

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