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March set to protest adult bookstore

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BY ROBERT BEHRE
 The Post and Courier

As many as 150 people are expected to attend a march against a West Ashley bookstore scheduled for 3:30 this afternoon, a Charleston City Councilman said.

"The march is to focus on ridding the community of drugs and the adult bookstore," Councilman Wendell Gilliard said. "We're also sending a message to the planning and zoning board on where the community stands on this issue."

Gilliard recently convinced City Council to consider rezoning to limited business the 904 St. Andrews Blvd. site where C&C Video and News operates. That zoning would require the store to close between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. The city's Planning Commission is scheduled to consider the change in January, and its recommendation goes back to council.

The bookstore has been in the city's sights for a while: It already has passed an ordinance that gave the owners three years to close down, move to a new location or change the content of its merchandise. Gilliard noted that the three-year amortization period is about halfway over.

While the store's fate is sealed, Gilliard said the neighborhood wants further action because bookstore patrons recently propositioned some youths from the nearby neighborhoods. The youths also have found sexually explicit material and drug paraphernalia near the store.

"We're trying to be proactive here. We don't want to get into a situation where a child might be molested," he said.

Gilliard noted that the bookstore is near several neighborhoods, a church and a Jewish cemetery, adding, "It's an embarrassment that we should even have this type of entertainment in the midst of all these entities."

Those involved in today's march are expected to assemble around 3:30 p.m. at Fifth Avenue and St. Andrews Boulevard. The march will start at 4 p.m.

"We're looking for anywhere from 100 to 150 people from Maryville, Ashleyville and Washington Park area," Gilliard said.

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