Committee to eye Cajundome event mix

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Cajundome — conventions and/or concerts?
Attempts to figure out the “proper balance” came to a head again Tuesday as the Cajundome-Auditorium Management Board took the issue up at its regular meeting.

Questions like, “Can the Cajundome meet convention needs?” “Can it achieve a good convention/entertainment mix without hurting financially?” and “Is there need for a separate exhibit hall?” should be subjects for a new committee, board members agreed.

Although not yet appointed, the committee is to consist of representatives from the Board, City, USL and Tourist Commission, they decided.

It was Board member Bill Rucks’ suggestion that a panel be chosen to study Cajundome capabilities and civic center markets to advise the full board on event scheduling.

Gerald Breaux, Cajundome board member and director of the Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission, wants Cajundome pricing examined, too.

While planned as a multi-purpose center, the new facility “doesn’t meet the needs of convention and conference groups that have contacted (the Cajundome) to date,” Rucks told the board in reporting an earlier meeting of its events committee.

Groups either require the entire arena space for floor exhibits and can’t meet for general sessions, or find themselves lost in too much space, he maintained.

Even groups interested in renting the Cajundome for conventions are being dissuaded by rates, Breaux claimed.

Shreveport and Lake Charles host conventions for less, he said, adding that an American Legion meet scheduled here this summer will be two days instead of three because of pricing.

Breaux and Rucks got no arguments from board members about the Cajundome’s need to include conventions.

Ultimate questions were to what extent, and what does that mean for income.

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