Council Again Delays Dome Commission

By MIKE HASTEN
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Lafayette city councilmen have again delayed the appointment of a commission to oversee operations of the Cajundome even though most of them say a commission is vital to getting the facility operating properly.

Councilman Bob Domingue says the city is hesitant to appoint a commission because “we have not gotten a firm commitment from the governor on funding” the completion of the facility. The present funding is about $5 million short of what is needed to complete it.

Domingue says if the city appoints the commission, “We’d be telling the state ‘We’ll take it like it is.’ We don’t want to get stuck with the cost.”

The city is using the commission to try to pressure the governor into acting, he said.

Simon Disagrees

But Council President Al Simon, the only one to vote against delaying the appointments, disagrees. He says the city should appoint a commission, which will select a director, and not try to play politics with the governor.

“I don’t feel this has anything to do with the state,” Simon said. “We’ve got no leverage on the governor. He’s just a slow-acting person and takes a long time to make decisions. I believe he will come up with the funds.”

Councilman Wilfred Pierre also says the commission should have been appointed weeks ago but says he voted to delay the appointment “out of respect for the mayor.”

Mayor Dud Lastrapes wants to wait until the state formally approves the additional funding, Pierre said.

“The manager should have been on board when the construction started,” Pierre said. “The manager is an integral part of such a facility operating properly.”

Lastrapes says he is “still certain” the money will be coming from the governor’s office. Treen was supposed to visit Lafayette today to make the announcement, but the trip was cancelled, he said.

Symbolic

Councilman W.M. “Dub” Hudson says the refusal to appoint the commission is symbolic. “If we went ahead with the appointments, we would symbolically be saying ‘everything’s great’ the way it is... I don’t feel we should give tacet approval to the thing as it stands now.”

The city should not be expected to pay for the completion of the facility, including parking lots, acoustical improvements and flooring, he said, because it will have to fund operation and maintenance. “The state and USL don’t pay to run it, it’s up to the citizens of Lafayette. It will take three years at least to break even and it’s got to be run very business-like. We need a commission now. We should have had a manager a year ago.”