Councilman Proposes Tax Idea For Cajundome Funds

City Councilman Benny Ritchey said last night he's willing to ask citizens to approve a temporary sales tax to raise money to complete the Cajundome if the state doesn't come across with more funds.

His comment was made during a discussion of a proposed Auditorium/Dome Commission, which would oversee operation of the existing Municipal Auditorium and Cajundome.

A proposal to create the commission was taken off the table last night and will be discussed more on Feb. 8.

City officials say another $5 million is needed to complete the Cajundome. That money would be spent on items such as a 1,000-slot parking lot and acoustical equipment.

The city has an agreement with the state to operate the civic center. But some Councilmen have said they are afraid creation of the Commission will be interpreted by the state to mean the city is willing to take responsibility for a building which is not complete.

Councilman W.M. “Dub” Hudson noted that Gov. Dave Treen has indicated that the state will provide part of the extra money needed.

“Indications don’t mean $5 million,” responded Ritchey.

Ritchey said the Council has agreed to discuss the creation of an Auditorium Dome Commission in February, but that does not mean it is committed to establishing the group.

“I’m prepared to ask the taxpayers for a temporary sales tax,” he said.

After the meeting, Ritchey told The Advertiser: “We have to do something. When you’re in a bind, you ask people to help you out.”

Gerald Breaux, director of the Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission, urged the Council to appoint the Commission soon.

“We do need to get this thing going,” Breaux said. He explained that Commission members will need to acquaint themselves with the facility and a director needs to be appointed.

Decisions must be made to help promote the Cajundome for conventions which are already looking for sites for 1987, 1988 and 1989 conventions, Breaux said.