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Cajundome officials who promised last month to study what’s best in a permanent management contract for the Dome gathered some study aids Monday.

They met with representatives of six firms which have expressed interest in managing the facility and offered them the chance to produce proposals.

Those representatives are expected back before a Dome committee with their ideas Dec. 9.

Another committee is working, meanwhile, to evaluate the pros and cons of in-house management arrangements.

Plans are to compare the two setups by mid-December so the new Joint Cajundome Commission can decide which better suits Dome needs, chairman Bill Rucks III said in earlier appointing committee members.

He gave commissioners Glenn Weber and Mario Mamalakis the job of evaluating private management, and commissioners James Caillier and Dr. Ken Brown the task of looking at in-house leadership.

Weber called Monday’s session with private firms a “pre-proposal meeting” for representatives to gather information on what proposals should include.

“They were told to develop their concepts on how they might manage the Dome, and give us their annual fee for a management contract,” he explained.

The hour and a half, closed-door meeting preceded the regular Commission meeting and included representatives from:

- Recreation and Leisure Services, the Cajundome’s current management company;
- Leisure Management International, based in Houston, Texas;
- Ogden Allied Leisure Services of Rockford, Ill.;
- Ashy and Ashy, a local legal firm with experience in entertainment bookings;
- Facility Management Group of New Orleans; and
- Daryl Schouest, a parish councilman who handles marketing for Evangeline Downs.

Another firm, Spectactor of Philadelphia, Pa., was invited to participate but did not, said Weber, explaining that invitations went out to all firms who’d expressed interest in managing the Dome.

He wrote letters to each Nov. 16, explaining that a new Cajundome board had been formed and asking for review of several Dome documents.

Those included an ownership agreement between the City and USL, an intergovernmental agreement between the two on Dome operation, the ordinance creating the Commission, interim management and food and beverage contracts with RLS, Dome budgets, financial statements and an independent study on Dome operations.

“We particularly invite your attention to that portion of (the intergovernmental agreement) which identifies that business plan which has been established for future operation of the Dome,” Weber wrote.

He made it clear in the letter that any new management contract would be subject to RLS still providing food and beverages for the Dome. The company has four years left on a five-year food and beverage contract.

Its separate contract for interim management of the Dome was recently extended from Oct. 31 to Dec. 1, with the understanding monthly extensions could be granted if management is still being debated.

“We while seek presentations and proposals from you that would have enough substance to enable the Commission” to choose a private manager, “be advised that we will be approaching ‘hearings’ on these proposals in an informal manner,” Weber’s letter adds.

In other words, private management companies are being asked to submit information that might ultimately help one secure a contract but doesn’t constitute formal bidding at this point, Weber told The Advertiser.

Should the Commission decide that private management is preferable to its hiring its own in-house manager and staff, it would probably begin negotiations with two or three firms having the best presentations in December, he added.

Each firm will be given an hour Dec. 9 to make its proposal to Weber and Mamalakis, who will then report their findings on private management to the full Commission, Weber said.

Caillier said he and Brown should have a report on in-house management by mid-December.

In other business Monday, the Commission:

- agreed to work with the Tourist Commission in resolving scheduling conflicts so a Beta Club convention, USL basketball and a Living