Dome agrees to rent Centroplex for hockey camp

By Nissa Darbonne

Cajundome Commission members agreed Monday to rent the Centroplex in Baton Rouge for an ice hockey camp so a local Junior League show can go on at the dome as planned.

The Junior League fund-raiser, “Tinsel and Treasures,” will be at the dome the weekend of Sept. 25, based on the dome commission’s decision Monday.

The ice hockey camp will be at the Centroplex Oct. 1-8, rather than at the Cajundome.

Junior League members had booked the dome first. Accommodating a deal a few weeks later for ice hockey at the dome means installing an ice rink. The rink concrete was to be cured through Sept. 22 and tested Sept. 22 through Sept. 30, readying it for the camp to begin Oct. 1.

The change left two weeks in September, prior to Sept. 22, open for Cajundome use. By moving the hockey camp to the Centroplex, however, testing can be conducted after the Junior League’s show Sept. 25, according to the compromise.

Fees to the Centroplex will run $9,600 to $12,000 for the eight days of use, according to Greg Davis, the dome’s director. The dome will also pay the hockey team’s expenses for the out-of-town camp: lunch for 30 players daily and charter bus commuting daily. The bill is expected to total $6,480.

Altogether, Davis estimates the Cajundome’s bill will run $16,080 to $18,480.

The dome commission voted 4-1 Monday permitting Davis to sign contracts with the Centroplex and with Dixieland bus service. Voting against was George Favaloro. Voting in favor were Pat LeBlanc, Dr. Ray Authement, Mario Mamalakis and Tom Brown.

The alternative was dealing with breach of contract problems with the Junior League of Lafayette, which signed a lease in February to use the dome the weekend of Sept. 25 for its fund-raiser, Tinsel and Treasures.

The dome signed a contract later, in March, for hockey play at the dome, meaning installing an ice rink and other dome changes to accommodate play.

Davis offered a Sept. 11 weekend date to the Junior League. But, retailers across the country had already deposited $40,000 for booths in the Sept. 25 show and had plans already for the Sept. 11 date, the Junior League responded.

The show earned $140,000 last year for local charities, according to the Junior League. The earlier date posed two additional problems. Potential patrons would be too busied by back-to-school matters and Festivals Acadiens is the weekend of Sept. 11.