

Dome/ from page 1

The committee explored several options. School district representatives introduced some, and university officials delivered some.

"The university came up with a figure, using the cost of repairs and maintenance that need to be done to the Dome, of around \$8 million for the next 10 years," Girard said.

A formula involving the city and the school district was used to determine how much each should contribute towards that amount.

"Using a cost split of that \$8 million, with the university taking two-thirds of the cost, and then the district taking one-sixth and the city taking one-sixth would make it a one-third, two-thirds partnership, with us and the city being the one-third," Girard said. "That boiled down to a payment of \$88,000 a year for the next 15 years, which came out to a total cost of about \$1.3 million."

The Vermillion School District attempted to negotiate an annual payment based on what the university receives for hosting the yearly South Dakota high school football championships.

"For those six games, the South Dakota High School Activities Association pays \$27,500 to use the Dome, so we felt that was a fairly viable basis for an agreement for us to pay four or five games in the Dome," Girard said. "We also threw out an option of going up to as much as \$50,000 per year as a payment to use the Dome, with an agreement that we would have to have more than just the varsity football games there – we would have to also play JV games there, and maybe have a couple track events there and get a little more use out of the Dome if we were going to be paying more."

A final proposal the committee agreed to recommend to all parties involved calls for the school district making a capital investment in the DakotaDome of between \$500,000 and \$700,000. The city would match that amount, meaning the total community investment in the facility would be between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

"That could be used towards the purchase of new turf, or whatever they (the university) deemed appropriate to use it for," Girard said, "and there was some discussion about possibly also having a yearly payment in addition to that, but no figure was derived for that yearly payment."

She said that university officials were not "extremely receptive" to most of those ideas. "They were really quite stuck on the \$88,000 payment, or they felt if a capital investment was going to be made, it really kind of needed to be upwards of about \$2 million (between the school district and the city) to use the facility."

Girard reiterated that the committee's role was not to make a final decision regarding a DakotaDome usage agreement, and therefore, the people serving on the body have not offered a recommendation.

She noted that, just as the university based its figures on estimates of needed upgrades to the DakotaDome; the school district also discussed the needs for improvement to its facilities that are commonly used by the USD.

"That was ultimately not chosen to be used," Girard said. "... We can build our own facility for \$750,000, but we would be playing outside."

"They (the university) also chose not to address the rest of the facilities of ours that they use?" asked Matt Lavin, a member of the school board.

"We did talk about that a little bit. Jason (Huska, VHS dean of students) shared some information about the hours of usage – I believe, if I remember correctly, that we ultimately use facilities on the campus up to about 40 hours total over the course of the whole year, and I believe that figure includes football games and the use of Slagle Hall," Girard said. "He (Huska) had some figures that they (the university) had already used our facilities well over 100 hours and he had stopped counting."

"So, it was clearly not equal," she said. "They (USD) use our track, they use our gyms, the commons, the fine

arts center, for lots of different activities. But it was not worked in to this proposal at all."

"The proposal of \$88,000 did have them splitting the cost of part of us upgrading our track," said School Board President Mark Bottolfson, noting that USD's proposal for the school district's use of the DakotaDome, in pure dollars, exceeds \$90,000.

"In essence, they gave us a credit back for use of the track, and then they agreed that any repairs or upgrades that needed to be made to the (high school) track, they would split the costs with us half and half," Girard said.

Earlier that evening, a representative of a company that builds outdoor sports stadiums addressed the board (see related story). Bottolfson said one reason for his appearance at the meeting is the still rather unpredictable circumstances regarding the use of the DakotaDome.

"That one reason ... for a doing a little bit more investigating into going our own avenue," he said. "We're going to have to have a place to play football and do other things in the fall, and not that I want to build our own stadium – I'd just as soon stay in the Dome and play inside – but we just simply don't have the resources to spend a lot of extra money over what it would cost to do this on our own."

"We did share with all members of the committee our five year capital outlay plan," Girard said. "We shared that we are working with very limited revenue in that fund source, and that if we were to go into this kind of agreement (offered by the university for use of the DakotaDome) that would mean there would be that many projects that we would have to delay."

"We know we have roofs that we have to replace; we have other things that we have to take care of. We have to do what is fiscally sound for the district," she said.

"It needs to be pointed out that we as a school district really want to remain playing football in the Dome, and that's what we are working towards," Superintendent Mark Froke said. "But there comes a point where you have to make a decision, like Chris said, as to what is best for the school district from a fiscal standpoint as well as how the taxpayers feel that there dollars are being used."

"That's what we are looking at," he said, "but clearly we would like to keep playing football in the Dome; it's the finest facility for football in the state, and we would like to continue being there."

Froke noted that there have been no arrangements for further negotiations involving use of the DakotaDome.

"That doesn't mean that that can't happen; I don't think we want to close the door on that," he said, "but our contract has run out. If we're not going to play football in the Dome this fall, we have to have another facility to play football in. That's why we are looking at those different avenues. The time for final decisions is upon us, but I don't think the door is closed for further discussions. I certainly invite that and encourage it."

No decision was made after Girard shared the committee's facts and figures with the board.

Costs/ from page 1

stand, generally speaking, is about \$175 per net seat, and that does include a foundation system as long as the soils aren't really, really out of reach and you don't have to put down some casings or something like that."

Many stadiums also include press boxes, and they generally cost approximately \$185 per square foot.

"That's craned in place, they are totally finished, they've been inspected, and that's with a photo platform system on top as well," he said.

"The grandstand figures include all of the seating, an interlock type of deck, but they obviously have a wheelchair ramp and all of the guardrail systems," Snyder said. "It does have an understructure steel support for a press box in case you want to build one locally on top of that."

Snyder's company just completed a stadium at Brookings. Other local communities that include the Minnesota's firm's sports seating include Yankton, Harrisburg, Garrettsville, Lennox and Huron.

"Typically, on a project that we provide, besides the materials, is all of the structural design. We have an engineer who is registered with the state who signs and seals all of the drawings and the calculations," Snyder said. "The one piece of information that we need to have is a soil boring test with an analysis. That way, we can design a proper footing that will marry into that soil."

Snyder's company also provides stadiums that include individual plastic seating. The cost of that feature, he said, is \$150 per stadium chair above and beyond the \$175 per net seat that he quoted for standard bench seating.

"When you get into anything with backrests or stadium chairs, then you also have to increase your tread depth," he said. "So beyond the cost of the chair, you need to go to a minimum of a 30-inch depth from front to front. That, of course, increases your aluminum and increases your steel."

Some schools that decide to feature seating reduce costs by only including them in a portion of the stadium, and using the standard bleacher seating in the remainder of the facility.

The school board is exploring the costs of making improvements to its outdoor football field and track, located near the high school. Proposed future costs, which are substantially higher than in past years, of using the USD DakotaDome as the Tanager football program's home field, are driving the discussion.

The high school's outdoor facilities has limited seating and no lighting.

The board is discovering, as it reviews its options, that it has little time remaining to make a decision.

"Generally speaking, we'd like to have all of the shop drawings approved and back to

the factory by mid-April," Snyder said, "in order to get it in for football. That's a fairly safe date. We can be quicker than that, but that's a fairly safe date that we like to shoot for."

"That said, if you are going to do it, you probably need to bid it by mid-March, and that gives us a month to do shop drawings and get them out here and review them and get them back to the factory," he said.

Snyder added, however, that there is some flexibility built into that schedule.

"You've got a lot of decisions, and if it just can't happen by then, we can live with whatever," he said.

Snyder has been involved in the stadium construction business for 29 years. His very first facility, built in a Minnesota community, is a baseball stadium that is still in use today.

"It looks basically the same as the day I put it in. Longevity really isn't an issue," he said.

"They are really a very durable product. It's basically a no-maintenance product."

Snyder said he is often asked by schools to recommend the number of seats in a stadium proposal. "That's really tough, but you're in the 1,000 to 2,000 range, probably, if you are talking about football. It's best if you can get some kind of ticket sales data and blend in your season tickets to come up with the amount of people that normally come (to a game)."

"What you want to do," he

added, "is build the stadium so that it's fairly full. But on the other hand, you don't want to build it so small that you're always out of seats, either. You want to have a crowd effect. It all depends on if you're team is winning or not. It really does. I can look at schools and see which ones are winning, and which ones are expanding their seating."

Snyder said it would likely be more cost effective for the school district to either refurbish its small existing bleacher facility and place it one side of the field for visitors, and locate its main stadium on the other side for the home crowd. The total cost of a smaller stadium, along with other required improvements to the field, is estimated to cost approximately \$360,000. The smaller facility would be an option if the Tanagers would be able to continue playing football in the DakotaDome.

Superintendent Mark Froke noted that if it becomes necessary to convert what is currently the school's practice field into its outdoor football/track facility, a larger stadium would be required, and the costs would go up approximately \$400,000. Field lighting estimated to cost \$170,000, would also be required, and is included in the total \$760,000 cost of constructing seating and making other improvements for playing football outdoors.

"Budget-wise, that can be handled if you want to go down that road," Froke said.

Exhibit/ from page 1

nicity divide us. I'm glad that some of the art addresses that issue as well, as well as the issue of peace."

She is particularly grateful for the assistance she received from Susan Heggstad, a Vermillion artist.

"I called her to ask if she would be willing to work with the VAAC on the event, and she agreed to do so," Wilson said. "She helped with publicity, she hung the art, and she and several of her children created art for the exhibit. Susan's contributions to the event are much appreciated by the VAAC."

There were no special guidelines given to artists who chose to participate in Monday's exhibit. The result was a wide spectrum of art, all dealing with the central theme of peace.

"There is such an interesting variety here of what you think about when you hear the word 'peace,' and as an artist, how you express that," Wilson said. "For me, I didn't think of the fact that I have some poems that talk about the need for peace, and I do, because it's a big concern of mine. I think that we often

think of art as a craft, as the technique, rather than the message that it might convey."

"My view of this exhibit the whole time was just to see what the artists will bring, to see what comes to the center, and I'm very pleased," she said.

Wilson hopes to urge the community to continually recognize King's legacy through art. Next year, the Washington Street Arts Center will host another show in his honor.

"Next year, it may not be art of peace, it may be some other theme," she said. "We might have to set some limits in terms of size, that sort of thing, but I like the freedom of it. And, I'd like to see even more. I'd like to see music. But this year, we're just getting started. We're seeing what we can do this first year, and we'll have time then, to think about what we may want to do next year."

Art, in Wilson's mind, fits in perfectly to help commemorate the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Art has the capacity to raise consciousness, so I would hope that when people view this art, they may think to themselves, 'what does that

have to with peace?'" she said.

Part of Monday's exhibit included several photos taken at Spirit Mound.

"People looking at that could get the sense of the importance of valuing nature," Wilson said, "and not want to destroy it. That has a great deal to do with peace, because war is very destructive to the natural world, and we are part of nature, too. We value the creation, we value all of the people who are part of the creation, so the different forms of art – the paintings, the photographs, the poem that are presented here – have many different messages, and I think that it's instructive to experience art, in ways that we can't even articulate in words."

Four students from the University of South Dakota are assisting with activities at the art center this year.

"It occurred to me that this

was a chance to do the kind of exhibit that we haven't done before, so I ran it by the (art center) board, and we decided to go ahead with it," Wilson said. "And, I just thought it would be a good thing to do something in the community to honor Martin Luther King."

Drury announces fall 2009 dean's list

Earning a spot on Drury University's dean's list is a significant accomplishment; it means a student earned a grade point average of 3.6 or greater (on a 4-point scale) while carrying a full-time course load of 12 or more semester hours.

In the fall 2009 semester, the following students made the dean's list for the day school: Samuel Brodeur McBride and David Andrew Rosacker, both of Vermillion.

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