

Not for sale, but Silverdome needs money

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

The Pontiac Silverdome might not be for sale, but it does need a little extra cash, according to two Oakland County commissioners who are again asking the county to give or loan \$4 million to the facility.

Commissioners Hubert Price Jr. and James D. Ferrens, Democrats from Pontiac, again raised the issue last week during a meeting of the finance committee of the county Board of Commissioners.

They introduced a similar motion last November. But not action was

taken because of several factors, including rumors that Pontiac officials were trying to sell the Silverdome, the home of the Detroit Lions and the site of concerts and trade shows.

Price said the money is needed to resurface the Silverdome parking lot, which, he said, has not undergone major repairs since the facility opened in the mid 1970s.

"The Silverdome is an asset to the entire community," Price said. City officials have said it's not for sale and it needs help.

"From time to time the county has made grants or loans to individual

communities for economic development, and I think this is the right thing to do," Price said.

Though Price said he would prefer a grant from the county, the measure he and Ferrens introduced calls for a loan at a favorable interest rate.

COMMISSIONERS, however, tabled the resolution, asking for more specific information about how much money is needed, how it will be spent and how a loan would be repaid.

"Before we do anything, I want to

know how much it would cost and where the money would go," said Commissioner John G. Pappageorge, R-Troy.

Price said the request for more information is understandable and that he's more than willing to provide additional data.

Pappageorge and others gave a more favorable response to a request for \$75,000 to fund two Oakland County grand juries.

THE REQUEST came from Prosecutor Richard Thompson, who said the money will cover anticipated expenses over the next six months, as

the grand jury initiated last fall winds down its investigations and a new panel — authorized earlier this month — begins deliberation.

As he has on several previous occasions, Thompson said the grand jury is the county's most effective tool in the war on drugs.

Since the jury was authorized in September, it has indicted five people for murder and 30 people for drug trafficking.

Thompson said he attributes that success to the grand jury's ability to compel reluctant witnesses to cooperate, either through grants of im-

munity or the threat of prison for lying or refusing to testify.

THE PROSECUTOR said he envies the grand jury becoming a permanent part of the county's efforts to curb drug trafficking.

Like his colleagues who also voted for Thompson's request, Commissioner Mark W. Chester, R-Troy, said he is impressed with the success of the grand jury. "It seems like the best thing we've got going," he said.

The prosecutor's request will go before the entire board at this week's regular meeting.

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