

Arena advisory panel announced

Its 9 members will weigh proposals, sites for venue that will replace 1st Mariner Arena

BY STEPHEN KIEHL
[SUN REPORTER]

The Baltimore Development Corp. released yesterday the names of the nine members of its advisory panel studying proposals for a new arena in the city and said the group plans to travel to Kansas City, Mo., next month to visit the new arena there.

Eight development groups have submitted proposals for a new Baltimore arena to replace the 45-year-old 1st Mariner Arena downtown. The BDC says the current arena, with its obstructed sight lines, tight corridors, small restrooms and cramped concourse level, is no longer competitive with other major arenas.

The proposals would keep the arena in Baltimore, either on its current site, on the water south of the football and baseball stadiums, in Canton or elsewhere in midtown or downtown Baltimore. The BDC asked developers to plan on a 15,000- to 16,000-seat arena, with 10 to 20 luxury boxes and 1,000 to 2,000 club seats.

Some of the developers said they would prefer building a 17,000- to 18,000-seat arena — the size required for professional basketball and hockey. The Sprint



The Baltimore Development Corp. has said that the 45-year-old 1st Mariner Arena is no longer competitive with similar venues and needs to be replaced.

KENNETH K. LAM [SUN PHOTOGRAPHER]

Center in Kansas City opened in October with an 18,000-seat capacity but no commitment from an NBA or NHL team.

"I don't think there's another

major city that has gone ahead with an arena of this size without a team, so that's worth knowing about to get a more in-depth view," said M.J. "Jay" Brodie, pres-

ident of the BDC and a member of the arena advisory panel. He said the panel will meet with key officials in Kansas City to learn how the arena was conceived and built.

Whether Baltimore should be as ambitious as Kansas City is one factor for the BDC's advisory panel to consider. Besides Brodie, the panel includes:

- Clarence T. Bishop, deputy secretary of the state Department of Business and Economic Development.

- J. Kirby Fowler, president of the Downtown Partnership.

- Donald C. Fry, president and CEO of the **Greater Baltimore Committee**.

- Carla Nelson, director of the Mayor's Office of Minority and Women-Owned Business Development.

- Douglas McCoach, director of the city Planning Department.

- Carolyn Blakeney, assistant deputy mayor for neighborhood and economic development.

- Kaliopé Parthemos, deputy chief of staff to City Council President Stephanie C. Rawlings-Blake.

- Frederick W. Puddester, chairman of the Maryland Stadium Authority.

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