

# The Providence Journal

## D.C. Firm Presents a Plan for Keaney

### URI President Hears a Formal Proposal for a 7,500-Seat Arena, Two Ice Rinks and a Golf Course

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By Mike Szostak

SOUTH KINGSTOWN - University of Rhode Island President Robert L. Carothers got his first good look yesterday at a proposal to replace Keaney Gym and build an ice-skating facility and a golf course on the URI campus.

Chris Dunlavey, a partner in the Washington, D.C., facilities planning and project management firm of Brailsford and Dunlavey, presented a formal plan to Carothers to replace URI's 45-year-old gym with a 7,500-seat arena; to build a rink with two ice surfaces that would be used initially for recreation and rental purposes, and to carve a golf course from woods and fields off Plains Road.

The projected cost of the arena and ice rinks is about \$ 40 million, the golf course \$ 3.5 million.

Carothers asked many questions and offered several suggestions. Dunlavey returned to Washington to answer the questions and incorporate the suggestions into his final report, which URI officials hope to receive by the end of next week.

"It was a positive meeting, absolutely," director of athletics Ron Petro said. "The president made some very good suggestions that we hadn't thought of."

Petro did not elaborate. He did say that Carothers has requested more information on how the new gym, ice rinks and golf course would fit with the other capital projects being considered and questioned the financial details, revenue projections and potential traffic congestion.

"We in the athletics department know what we would like, but the president and the Board of Governors have to worry about the university as a whole. They have to establish priorities," Petro said.

URI has spent \$ 100,000 to have Brailsford and Dunlavey complete an athletics program marketing and facilities study. Yesterday's meeting was the first formal presentation of the firm's proposal.

Keaney Gym is outmoded compared to many on-campus arenas. An ice rink has been talked about for decades; the seed money for the Mackal Field House was originally intended for an ice arena. Retired professor Dick Skogley proposed a golf course 25 years ago.

A university committee chaired by Kenneth N. Kermes, vice president for business and finance, has worked for the last three months on the issues of capital improvement and athletics project feasibility. This group's ultimate goal is to present to the Facilities and Finance Committees of the Board of Governors a plan for major capital investments for the period 1999-2003.

Among the proposals under consideration are the rehabilitation of 10 buildings on the Kingston campus; work on the Aquaculture Laboratory and Ocean Technology Center on the Narragansett Bay Campus; work on the Coastal Institute in Kingston; work on a multicultural center; expansion of two facilities on the Kingston campus, and major road/parking-lot improvements and site acquisitions and rehabilitation on Upper College Road.

A housing and dormitory rehabilitation, announced recently, and the athletics facilities improvements and the golf course are not included in any capital campaigns at this point.