

South waits for Joan

Ready, steady...but can we go ahead with Panorama 2007 Madam Minister?

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PAN TRINBAGO President Patrick Arnold has made a loud pronouncement about Panorama Finals 2007 being held in San Fernando, but both the NCC and Culture Minister Joan Yuille-Williams hold the key to the venue.

San Fernando Mayor Kenneth Ferguson cautiously admitted on Wednesday that even though it is being bandied about that the arrangement to host the pan finals at Skinner Park is a done deal, Yuille-Williams is yet to make a declaration.

"The minister is yet to make a pronouncement," Ferguson said in an interview at Skinner Park, the proposed venue.

"But we are optimistic that it will happen. It is not insurmountable."

Alderman Junia Regrello, who accompanied the mayor, intervened to explain that even though Pan Trinbago made an announcement, authorisation lies with the National Carnival Committee.

"We need to get official clearance from the NCC," Regrello said explaining that it is the NCC, the caretaker of Carnival, which will be spearheading the project.

"What the mayor is saying is that we have to meet with the NCC and outline our plans and then move from there in terms of

how do we go about putting the infrastructure in place," Regrello added.

A task force has been appointed to spearhead the project, but the mayor said modifications to the Park will not kick into gear until final approval comes from the minister.

Regrello said it has to happen in the next few days if they are to meet the Panorama deadline.

Asked about the possibility of the minister rejecting the idea to host the competition in San Fernando, both men were very adamant that could not happen.

"They can say so, but San Fernando was the only corporation that submitted a proposal, so they have no choice. And again, they have nowhere else to go," Regrello stated.

Ferguson said they have been very proactive, and they are standing-by, waiting for the all-clear to start building.

The mayor also said he intends to approach the Urban Development Corporation of T&T (Udecott) for the steel structures they will tear down from the Queen's Park Savannah for use on the stage and stands in San Fernando.

In terms of the \$1 million first prize for the winning Panorama steelband promised if South got the competition, Regrello backtracked somewhat, saying that was Pan Trinbago's call.

He explained that Pan Trinbago had made that proposal to Yuille-Williams and he was just

echoing their sentiments.

Ferguson said while he was not prepared to commit himself to a figure, whatever the decision Corporate South will raise the amount.

"This is a great opportunity for San Fernando and the business community and we are ready for any challenges that may come our way," Ferguson said.

Right: Alderman JUNIA REGRELLO, left, with map in hand for Skinner Park 2007 Panorama chats with San Fernando Mayor KENNETH FERGUSON in the Park during their tour on Wednesday. Below, The layout for Skinner Park 2007 Panorama.

PHOTOS: TONY HOWELL

