

to follow which is what is proposed. The request, however, with the planning money, rather, the language contained numbers that the maximum cost of the building should be approximately 9.9 million. A request came back in at 13.3. And what we are recommending to be funded, including the 160,000 planning money, is a total of 11.5. I think it's important that money that has been spent on planning that then construction follows. And I say that again, because again when I came on Appropriations Committee, I don't remember the exact amount but it runs in my mind it was around a million two, it was between a million and a million two, of funds over the previous several years had been spent for planning and then nothing ever constructed. And a million, million two back in 10, 12 years ago was a lot more money than a million two is today. So it makes sense when the Legislature made a decision a year ago to do the planning money for this facility that it makes sense that the construction follow this year and others can speak and will speak to the need for the facility. The first request was first initiated in 1970 which is roughly 19, going on 20 years ago, and it's not a structure that...that has not been...to have demonstrated need for a long time and I would hope that this item is not deleted.

PRESIDENT: Senator Ashford, please.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Mr. President, and members, I believe there will be some other speakers to talk about the Fine Arts Building and I will mention a few points. But I wanted to relate a conversation that I had just the other day with an arts teacher in the Omaha Public Schools who had graduated from the Fine Arts School at UN-O who teaches in the...in the north side of Omaha in a Magnet School. And he indicated to me that since the beginning of his year, this last year as a teacher, at this Magnet School that four of his students...and they were junior and high school students, four separate...in four separate instances had been killed as a result of drug-related slayings in the Omaha community. And he related to me how, of course, how tragic this was and how tragic this was for him personally and then continued to relate to me how important he felt that the arts was in his efforts and in the school district's effort to communicate with children who are the victims of the violences going on in Omaha today. And I think we have heard and read in the last several months about the efforts being undertaken in Omaha to expand the arts in these areas of the city which have been victimized by the drug problem and sometimes we gloss over it in this body and I know not