

# Silverhill to proceed with building of new meeting place

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**By John Underwood**

SILVERHILL, Ala. — The Silverhill Town Council is moving forward with with plans to build a new facility to replace the Little Bohemian Hall.

Approximately 35 residents turned out for a public meeting Thursday, May 12, at the Silverhill Town Hall to discuss the fate of the historic structure which now sits at Silverhill's Ball Park. The building was shifted off its foundation and sustained extensive damage during a tornado that struck in Silverhill March 9.

Mayor Tim Wilson said he was pleased with Thursday's turnout.

"I am really glad we did this," he said of the Thursday meeting.

While there were some pleas at Thursday's meeting to save the structure, the general consensus at the end of Thursday's meeting was that plans would proceed to declare the structure a total loss and proceed with a new facility.

While the new facility would remain at the Ball Park, it would likely be moved to another part of the park to allow for an additional parking structure to be built,

Wilson also said, for now, the existing Little Hall building could remain in its current location while talks continue to possibly involve a representative with the Czech Republic Consulate to help fund rebuilding the structure, but in order for the building to maintain insurance, it would have to be moved from its current location.

Wilson said there is no land available that could be used for the structure.

"We have some land, but what we have is too wet for this type of structure," he said. There was also talk of moving the building to land located near the town's library but, Wilson said, he was told by Silverhill Fire Chief Gary Patrick that the property did not have the required set-backs for the structure.

Wilson began Thursday night's meeting by acknowledging the Havel family, who donated the original structure to the town for use as a gym facility for the town's school.

Wilson addressed members of the Havel family directly and asked if there was anything specific they would want done with the structure.

A representative of the Havel family said the only thing they would want is whether the current structure was used or a new structure built, when the town began charging for use of a facility again, the money go toward improvements to the ball park.

Wilson then addressed insurance concerns with the building, saying that it would cost an estimated \$65,000 to \$70,000 to lift the facility and put it back on its foundation. Because of possible termite damage to the facility, that cost could increase once the lifting process was started.

If the facility were declared a total loss, estimated replacement cost on the structure is \$234,000, Wilson said, including cost for demolition estimated at \$17,500 and reconstruction costs estimated at around \$110 per square foot for the approximately 2,000 square foot structure.

If plans were to try and save the structure, Wilson said, there were estimated depreciation costs of just over \$75,000 which would bring a net of approximately \$158,000 to rebuild the facility.

Representatives from the town's insurance provider confirmed at Thursday's meeting that if the structure were put back at the same location, the structure would not be insurable, however, the existing structure could be brought back to code and moved to another location.

Many of those in attendance agreed that if a deal could not be worked out to fund reconstruction of the facility, leftover materials from the current facility could be used in the building of a new facility.

At Monday's regular meeting the Town Council voted to approve the insurance report and proceed with declaring the facility a total loss.

Wilson said a meeting has been set for Wednesday, May 25 with representatives from the engineering firm Goodwin, Mills and Cawood, to discuss plans for the new facility. Once plans were drawn up, they would be made available for public viewing and another town meeting would be set to receive public input on the plans.

After receiving public input, final plans would then be drawn up and the town could then begin the bid process for construction of a new facility.

“By then we should know whether or not we are going to try and save Little Hall or if we are going to proceed with plans to demolish the structure,” Wilson said.

Wilson reminded Council members that once the insurance statement declaring Little Hall a total loss was signed, there would be no insurance on the structure at its current location. If the structure were to be brought back to code and moved to another location, insurance could be reinstated at the new location.