

Can Little Hall be saved?



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SILVERHILL, Ala. — Can the Little Hall be saved?

While the Town of Silverhill is moving forward with plans to build a new facility, the prospect of restoring Little Hall at another location has attracted attention beyond the confines of the small town and could easily go international.

Kenneth H. Zezulka, honorary consul general of the Czech Republic, based out of New Orleans, met with the Silverhill Town Council Monday night to discuss the possibility.

“All it takes is for someone to get behind it,” he said, “but nothing is going to be done unless we get support locally.”

The historic structure, which now sits at Silverhill’s Ball Park, was shifted off its foundation and sustained extensive damage during a tornado that struck in Silverhill March 9.

Approximately 35 residents turned out for a public meeting Thursday, May 12, to discuss the fate of the structure and the Town Council voted at its meeting Monday, May 16 to proceed with plans to build a new facility after receiving word from its insurance company that the structure had been declared a total loss.

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,

said Silverhill Mayor Timothy Wilson, for now, the existing Little Hall building could remain in its current location while talks continue.

Former mayor Allen Green has been in contact with Zezulka and other officials with the Czech Consulate and said Monday the biggest concern is finding another location for the structure.

“Right now there just isn’t anywhere to put it,” Green said, “but it is certainly worth a shot.”

Wilson began the meeting May 12 by acknowledging the Havel family, who donated the original structure to the town for use as a gym facility for the town’s school and several members of the family were present at Monday’s meeting.

The Town Council called a special meeting Wednesday, May 25 to meet with Jim Walker and Chad Jordan from Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood Engineering and signed a waiver beginning the phase of rebuilding Little Hall.

Estimated replacement cost on the structure is \$234,000.

At Monday’s meeting, officials discussed the possibility of forming a committee to salvage the structure. Zezulka stated that it did not matter if everyone involved with the project were of Czech descent. He also said he had connections with the Swedish Consulate and could possibly get them involved as well.

“What we really need are good stories,” he said. “Something that can create an emotional connection to the building with the people here. If we can make that connection, you will be surprised where the money will come from.”