

Fate of Little Hall to be discussed at Aug. 25 meeting

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By John Underwood

SILVERHILL, Ala. — The fate of Silverhill's Little Bohemian Hall continues to hang in the balance as residents prepare once again to come together to discuss rebuilding the damaged structure at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 25 at Silverhill Town Hall.

The Silverhill Town Council voted at its meeting Monday, May 16 to proceed with plans to build a new structure and plans have been discussed to move Little Hall from its current location and refurbish the structure for use as a museum.

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.

Former Town Mayor Frankie Kucera said Monday he has been in contact with a building contractor, who has provided a detailed plan and estimate of what it would take to rebuild the structure. Those plans will be revealed at the Aug. 25 meeting, Kucera said.

Another former Mayor Alan Green, has been in contact with officials from the Czech Republic Consulate, based out of New Orleans and Mayor Tim Wilson said on Monday there is a possibility, since the structure will be used to house historic materials, the town could apply for a \$25,000 grant to help pay to have the structure moved and refurbished.

The other concern with moving the structure is land. Property must be donated in order to move the structure for further use.

"There are a few areas owned by the town that we're looking at," Kucera said. "If that proves not to be an option, then we will have to look at a private donation."

Wilson said at the May 12 meeting 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.

Estimated replacement costs 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 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.

"I am determined to save that building," Kucera said, "but it's going to take the cooperation of everybody involved to do so."