

Save The Little Hall Committee presents proposal to Silverhill Town Council



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By John Underwood

SILVERHILL, Ala. – Residents packed Silverhill Town Hall for Tuesday night's Council meeting, many of whom were there to support efforts to save the Little Bohemian Hall.

Frankie Kucera, chairman of the Save The Little Hall Committee, made a presentation to council members at Tuesday's meeting including plans to straighten, move, and remodel the structure.

"I hope we can join forces to bring this building back to life," Kucera said. "Little Hall has always been a servant of the people and it's time we get it moved so we can get it back to where it can once again serve the people."

The building was shifted off its foundation and sustained extensive damage during a tornado that struck in Silverhill March 9. 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.

At Tuesday's meeting Kucera first presented quotes to straighten and move the structure, including \$18,800 from Fauver's House Movers and Construction Co. Inc. of Semmes and \$19,000 from Ducky Johnson House Movers of Grand Ridge, Fla. Fauver's presented a second quote of \$24,750 for a solid footing, which was recommended by the mover, Kucera said.

Another quote of \$10,000 was made by Williams House Movers of Atmore, the company that originally moved the structure from the school to its current location but, Kucera said, the company did not have the ability to straighten the structure.

"He basically said he didn't have the equipment to get the walls in place, but said if we could do that, then he could move it," Kucera said.

Kucera also presented a plan from Michael York Home Builders of Silverhill to replace the back of the building, along with replacing the wiring and air conditioning, once the structure is moved, at a cost of \$40,215. Total cost of the project to straighten, move and remodel the structure would be around \$60,000.

Plans are, Kucera said, to move the structure to Paul Anderson Park across from Town Hall, facing the intersection of Highway 104 and County Road 55. The structure would be used for a museum.

"We have a lot of items in the library that could be put in the museum, and several people have already come forward saying they would donate items for a museum," Kucera said. The structure would be open during the town's Heritage Day celebration in September, along with other special events, and would be open for school field trips and other tour groups.

While the facility was originally used as a school and meeting place for the town's Czechoslovakian population, Kucera said, the museum would not be limited to Czech items.

"This building is for all the people and everyone is welcome to donate to and use the facility," he said.

The Committee will have a booth set up at this year's Heritage Day Festival, planned for Saturday, Sept. 17, serving as information for the future plans for the structure and collecting donations, Kucera said.

Kucera also came before the meeting Tuesday night, asking that monies received by the town to demolish the structure be used to remodel the structure.

"If we could use that money, along with other money already collected, that would at least get the building moved so we could start with the remodeling process," Kucera said.

Council member Jared Lyles said while the town certainly wants to help with moving and remodeling the structure, legal issues with using demolition funding to remodel the structure would have to be sorted out before that money could be donated.

"We just want to make sure everything is done right," Lyles said.

Lyles did, however, propose to set up an account with United Bank in Silverhill for the purpose of collecting donations for the structure. The account would have to be advertised and presented to the council at its Sept. 19 meeting for approval as a resolution.

The measure was approved unanimously by the council with Mayor Tim Wilson and council members Lyles, Bert Jones and Shirley Stephens voting for the measure. Council members Wayne Gruenloh and Steve Brooks were not present at Tuesday's meeting.