

Silverhill Town Council agrees to back Committee's efforts to save Little Hall

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By John Underwood

SILVERHILL, Alabama — After another hour-long discussion on the matter, the Silverhill Town Council approved a pair of actions Monday night supporting the Save the Little Hall Committee's efforts to save the 80-year old structure.

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.

On Monday, the council voted 4-2 to move the building to Paul Anderson Park across from town hall, provided that the facility be brought up to code and restore the building to its original appearance, which means replacing the vinyl siding on the structure with natural wood.

Council member Jared Lyles, who voted against the measure at the council's Nov. 7 meeting, said he would be in favor of putting the building in Anderson Park, provided that the council have final approval for any plans to remodel the structure and provided that the building not be used primarily as a museum.

"If it's going to be just a museum, I just don't see any way we're going to be able to make money off of it," he said, "and we still have to be concerned about upkeep on the structure and how we're going to pay for that 10 years down the road."

Committee Chairman Frankie Kucera said while the building could be used to house historic materials and could be used as a museum for certain events, there are a multitude of other uses for the building.

"You can have dances there, family reunions, receptions. It can be used for youth recreational activities," he said. "There's all kinds of things it can be used for."

Kucera also answered the council's concerns about fundraising efforts for renovating the structure by presenting the council at Monday's meeting with pledges totaling nearly \$13,000. Kucera said the Committee also plans to advertise asking for additional pledges. They are also looking for corporate sponsors and have plans for additional fundraising efforts, including a spaghetti dinner sale, curbside Krispy Kreme donut sales, car washes and a car show.

"Our goal is to raise a total of \$30,000," he said. "Everyone who has committed to help with this are upstanding individuals who won't quit until the job is done. We want to save the building and we have a long list of people who are willing to do what it takes to do just that."

Council members Steve Brooks and Bert Jones voted against the measure.

"The only problem I have at this point is the location," Brooks said. "I'm all for saving the structure. I just think by putting it there, you are breaking up the town square and I just don't think we should do that."

Brooks had expressed interest in moving the structure to property on the northeast end of the park which was originally built for tennis courts. The structure was donated to the town by the Havel family with the stipulation that family members have right of refusal to any future plans for the structure. Mayor Tim Wilson said he approached members of the family idea who were against moving the structure to that area of the park.

In other business, the council voted unanimously to enter into a contract with Fauver House Movers to right the structure getting it ready to move.

Kucera said the Committee had decided on Fauver among three bids to move the structure, with a total quote of \$18,800, payable in three installments, first to get the structure ready to move, then another payment once the structure is moved and a final payment when set up at the new location is finished.

The council agreed to pay half of the first installment, up to \$4,000, pending approval of a contract just to right the structure in preparation of the move.

Money from the council will be provided from a \$17,500 insurance settlement intended to demolish the structure.