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## St. Pauls: Town hall repairs pondered

by Bob Shiles

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Tom Fregeau, left, and Steve Norris, both of MCE Corporation, discuss possible renovations of the St. Pauls Town Hall with town commissioners.

**ST. PAULS** — Town officials are hoping to tap into some federal economic stimulus money to make renovations to the town hall.

The town has until Feb. 27 to submit a plan to U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre outlining how the stimulus funding would be used. President Barack Obama has been encouraging communities to submit “shovel-ready proposals” for capital projects that would spur economic growth and create jobs.

“This might be the ideal project for this kind of funding,” Town Administrator Stuart Turille said. “We could put people to work tomorrow on buildings here if we had the money.”

According to Turille, there have been no major renovations to the town hall — which houses town offices, the courts, and the police department — for the past 42 years.

“We need space,” he said. “The roof is leaking. Walls are not insulated. Floors are deteriorating. The exterior of the building is deteriorating.”

During their regular meeting Thursday, the commissioners discussed possible renovations with Steve Norris, vice president of MCE Corporation’s Southeast Division, and Tom Fregeau, a civil engineer with MCE. The MCE employees are putting together a conceptual design that the town can submit as part of its application for the economic

stimulus money.

Norris told commissioners that if the town hall is renovated, there will be a lot of work to bring it up to code. Although the commissioners questioned whether it might be more feasible to tear down the existing building and construct a new one, Norris said that the “best bet is to renovate.”

**In other business, Jessica Lowery, executive director of the Robeson County Partnership for Children, updated town officials on her agency’s programs. The Partnership for Children oversees the county’s Smart Start program.**

**Lowery told the commissioners that the Partnership has paid out \$16,600 so that child care workers from St. Pauls’ six licensed child-care homes could attend Robeson Community College or The University of North Carolina at Pembroke to pursue higher education.**

**She also noted that Horizon Point — a Partnership funded organization that aids child abuse victims and their families — recently held a workshop for adults and children at the Shining Star Child Care Center in St. Pauls. The workshop, “Protecting My Body,” was attended by five children and 14 child care providers, Lowery said.**

In other business, the commissioners:

— Heard a presentation from Jenny Faircloth, of the First Pentecostal Holiness Church, about a “sidewalk Sunday School” that will be held in the community every other Saturday beginning in March and continuing through at least May. The program that Faircloth said is designed to “draw children who don’t have a church to attend on Sunday” will include music, game time and lesson time.

“We are not promoting any one church,” Faircloth told the commissioners. “This is not a come to my church thing.”

The commissioners showed strong support for the proposal.

“If we can get God into our community, we can solve a lot of problems,” Commissioner Ghee Johnson said.

— Approved a contract with Koonce, Noble & Associates to do water and sewer mapping for the town.

— Approved a resolution allowing property that has been declared surplus to be sold electronically on Gov. Deals.