

STDC has replacement plan for hall destroyed by fire

By GRETA CLEARY

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A COMMUNITY facility will be built at the Normanby Domain to replace the hall that was destroyed by fire last month.

The South Taranaki District Council also decided on Monday night that money put aside in 2007 for refurbishing the Normanby Hall would be kept as a contingency fund if the replacement exceeded the insurance payment.

Last year \$103,000 was allocated in the capitals renewals programme for

redcoration of the hall and a new heating system.

The decision to keep the money available was not unanimous.

Councillor Mike Powell was concerned if the money was used on top of the insurance for a replacement facility it would be misusing allocated funds.

"The building has gone now. If we can't build a purpose-built facility for the insurance, then we were under-insured," he said. "Every dollar we spend is ratepayers' money and we should save money where we can."

Mayor Ross Dunlop said he was worried if extra money was kept aside,

it would be used to build something bigger than what was needed.

But councillor and Normanby resident Andy Beccard said users understood the need to be realistic in planning a replacement hall.

"People of Normanby are level-headed and not over the top."

He said it would be nice to have the extra money there if it was needed to create something more suitable.

Councillor Ian Wards said if the money was already in the budget, it should be used to create something more functional for the community.

"We should not be expecting to see

something exactly the same as what was lost."

A meeting was held at the Normanby School hall on Monday night by eight groups which used the hall.

Representatives from each group, as well as a community representative, have formed a steering committee that produced a list of ideas they would like included in a new facility.

Ideas included a building that faced the field, four changing rooms and showers, a deck area with rain cover, a larger kitchen, collapsible stage and outside toilets.

A grandstand was also suggested.

Local designer Jack Rangiwhia attended the meeting to hear the concepts and will develop a draft design.

Part of the STDC's recommendation was that the group would have input into a design that would be considered by the council.

Work will commence as soon as possible after the insurance is paid.

The insurance capped the cost of demolition, which began yesterday, at \$22,500 plus GST. The council is still waiting for a confirmation of the replacement figure of \$743,000 plus GST that was given as a valuation by the insurance company last year.