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CONT FROM CORNELL BUILDING, A1

While there are no guarantees, the decorative building appears to be in a better position than it was just a couple of months ago when supervisors appeared intent on

new construction.

"The better option from the county's point of view is to replace the building," said supervisor's Chair Shaun Gilliland. "But if the community wants to invest in it" they will be given a chance.

Gilliland said that to date such fundraising efforts have not born fruit. "There has been a tremendous amount of hue and cry about saving that building, but we haven't seen anyone willing to write a check," he said.

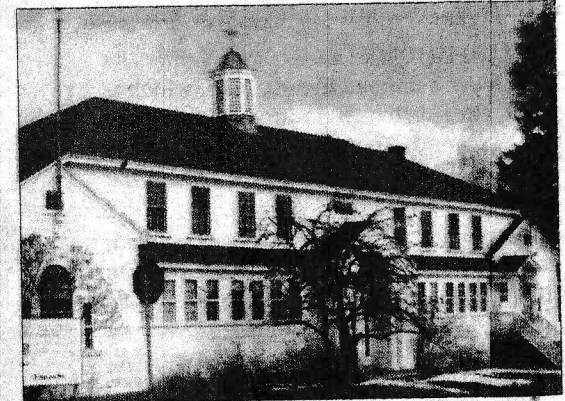
Nor is the federal money assured, since it would come from federal infrastructure legislation that has yet to pass Congress. The supervisors had applied to Rep. Elise Stefanik's office for a federal earmark to build new but will modify that request to include renovation. A vote before the full board in favor of amending the request was unanimous.

It's a victory for groups such as the Town of Westport, the Westport Historical Society, and the Adirondack Architectural Heritage, which had mounted a campaign to draw attention to the county's plan to demolish the century-old building. Preservationists felt one of their more effective tools was to juxtapose a picture of the old ornate building with a photo of the plain health building at the other end of the fairgrounds upon which the new building would have been modeled.

Gilliland said it would be up to the board to determine the number of matching funds the community will be responsible for raising. There

are broad differences of opinion as to what it will cost to renovate the historic structure. The county believes those costs would approach \$2.5 million, almost double what Westport believes.

As evidence, Westport Supervisor Ike Tyler has pointed to the Westport Town Hall, an old decrepit Grange hall that was restored at a reasonable cost by involving the community in the work.



Slated for demolition, the Cornell building at the Westport Fairgrounds may be saved if community steps forward.

Photo provided

The Colonial Revival building, which is on the National Historic Register, began life in 1924 as Westport Junior Achievement building, as one of the many projects of Ticonderoga industrialist and philanthropist Horace Moses.

It was designed by New York City architect Max Westhoff, who is believed to have come to the Adirondacks to take the cure for tuberculosis in Saranac Lake. His firm went on to design a number of significant camps and commercial buildings in the region. ■

CORNELL BUILDING IN WESTPORT MAY SURVIVE, WITH CONDITIONS

BY Tim Rowland

STAFF WRITER

ELIZABETHTOWN | After hearing public sentiment favoring the preservation of the Cornell building at the Essex Fairgrounds, supervisors agreed Tuesday (June 6) to give it a chance, on two conditions.

One is that a \$1 million grant request to demolish the building and build new can be modified to include refurbishment. The second is that the public pony up matching funds to help pay for the renovations.