Broussard to get new City Hall in historic house

Beverly Corbell beverly@theadvertiser.com

BROUSSARD — In about eight weeks, Broussard will have a new City Hall in one of the most historic houses in town.

Broussard, known for its historic homes, was incorporated in 1864 and named for its first settler, Valcin Broussard, who donated land for a church and railroad depot. He also owned the land at 393 E. Main, where the house being renovated for City Hall was built by his daughter and son-in-law, Cecile and Joseph Broussard, in 1889.

The house stayed in the Broussard family until it was sold to Joseph O. Girvanhaus in 1912. According to Major Charles Langlinais and great-great-grandson of the house's builder, great-grandson of the house's builder, the house has not changed much since it was built.

The city acquired the buildings and the house at the auction, and the contents of the buildings, Langlinais said, so the city was able to acquire a lot of office furniture and machinery tools. The company conducting the auction competed the inclusion of the building's contents in the sale.

In October 2001, at a cost of $23,000, the city of the two-story house is more than 1,000 square feet. Langlinais said, and its purchase included three adjacent metal buildings with combined area of about 14,000 square feet. Langlinais said the buildings, built in 1928, will probably be used as reception halls.

The building will house the city's administrative offices, he said, and the Broussard Police Department will expand into the present City Hall.

When the city acquired the buildings and the house at the auction, the city had the contents of the buildings, Langlinais said, so the city was able to acquire a lot of office furniture and machinery tools. The company conducting the auction competed the inclusion of the building's contents in the sale.

They contended legal action on the machinery tools, but the city moved on from the lot and the city leaders were not too worried about the machinery.

“After we took the machinery tools, we were able to use the machinery tools for other purposes,” Langlinais said. “They were not too worried about the machinery tools, but they were worried about the machinery tools and the machinery tools and the machinery tools and the machinery tools.”

Langlinais said.

They city was more worried about the machinery tools, he said, but they were sold for $22,000. The city also sold the new water well on the property, he said, which he said will come on line shortly.

The previous city council authorized buying and fixing up the old house for a new City Hall, Langlinais said, and estimated the cost at $30,000, with the city doing most of the contracting, but on further inspection, city leaders found that more work was needed.

Russell Mouton with PSC Construction lays down dividers for the concrete parking lot at the historic house in Broussard that will soon be the new City Hall.
Broussard

“We found bad wiring and bad air conditioning ducts and when the cost hit $90,000, I shut it down,” Langlinais said.

Once the city determined all the work needed to make the house habitable, the work was advertised for bid, which London Construction of Lafayette won with a bid of $220,000.

Langlinais said about half the cost is for work outside the house.

“The most expensive part, by far, is adding concrete for parking and handicapped ramps,” he said. “Parking will be in the front yard, but we will also landscape some areas.”

Without being specific, Langlinais said some people were critical of the city’s buying the old home.

“There are those ‘antis’ out there that felt that for $300,000 we could get a new city hall,” Langlinais said. “But the council felt the historical building was well worth it.”

City Council member Harold Johnson, who was on the council when the home’s purchase was approved, said that he’s glad the new City Hall will preserve Broussard’s historic past.

“I think it will be good because we have so many historic buildings in Broussard,” he said, “and in the long run, I think it will be cheaper than building a new one.”