Arts Center ready to break ground for garden

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism has awarded The Arts Center virtually its entire $10,000 grant it had applied for in order to implement a sculpture garden at its Butler Street site.

Now, Executive Director Tommye Hurst said a groundbreaking of the site where the garden will be established is scheduled to take place sometime next week.

"We have received all permissions from the state and are ready to move ahead," Hurst said.

Last fall, Hurst told Clemson City Council members that she wanted to beautify the exterior of The Arts Center through two projects that included the implementation of a sculpture garden — featuring areas for rotating sculpture exhibits, outdoor art education spaces and natural heritage garden areas.

City Council agreed to be the guarantor for local matching funds not to exceed $10,000 on the sculpture garden.

"The development and implementation of a sculpture garden would feature areas for rotating sculpture exhibits, outdoor art education spaces, as well as natural heritage garden areas," Hurst said.

Hurst said the area could be developed as "a cultural center for our community."

"The idea is to take advantage of the grounds surrounding The Arts Center in a manner that supports its mission of celebrating local art and artists and providing a recreational experience for visitors," Hurst said. "The project will provide five pads connected by pathways and each pad will allow for a piece of outdoor sculpture to be exhibited.

"Exhibits will be changed on a schedule that adds at least one new piece per quarter, with an emphasis on nature inspired art."

According to Hurst, a mixture of plantings, the building and fencing will enclose the entire area. The primary entrance will be through an arbor accessed by the sidewalk along the parking area while the secondary entrance will be through the event room. The pathway will be packed gravel with the pads being made out of pavers.

Hurst added that not only will plants be used to screen the existing chain link fence, accent plantings will also be located around each pad. The balance of the site will remain as grass and the entire site will be irrigated to ensure successful maturation of plant materials.

"We will also have a bench adjacent to each pad and there will be screenage and storage for the utility area by the back door and screening of the Dumpster," Hurst said. "This will make a huge improvement and bring tourists in."

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