

\$75K grant may help bring events center downtown

BY NORM CANNADA
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Members of the Seneca Improvements Corporation board unanimously approved up to \$75,000 in local grant funds to help a businesswoman turn a vacant building into an events center

on the main floor with four Airbnb units on the second floor.

Mary Tannery presented a revised request for assistance through the city's Commercial Building Improvement Program to develop the former

SEE GRANT, PAGE A5

"We will package it in weddings, companies coming in, so they rent out the entire building they want," Tannery told the board at its meeting Wednesday morning. "There'll be a two-bedroom (unit) in the front with a really nice, open space there and three one-bedroom (units). Hopefully, we can work with the city to do maybe a package deal to see how we could work in the great space at (Norton Thompson) park for the wedding. The building is one of the oldest ones in the city, and it just has such character. She added she hopes to

market the units to people coming to the area next fall for Clemson football games. This fall the city began offering tailgating and free CATbus rides from downtown Seneca and Gignilliat Field to Clemson University for home football games and showing games on a large-screen TV in Norton Thompson Park for those without a ticket to the game.

The board also approved up to \$13,000 through the same grant program on Wednesday to One Church to rehabilitate the former United Way building on East North 1st Street. The church is doing renovation work inside and outside the building, as well as making repairs to a catch

basin, sinkholes and a retaining wall in the parking lot at the property.

Board member Josh Riches said the work in the parking lot will improve the look of the property and enhance safety.

"I do like the safety component, because that's a big part of what we're trying to do with the buildings," Riches said. "If you have an unsafe parking lot, that creates major issues for the downtown."

The grants are reimbursements and require receipts to be submitted.

The improvements corporation began offering the Commercial Building Improvement Program in August 2018 to encourage property owners to make

improvements to downtown properties. At the same time, the organization began the Economic Development Incentive Program, a grant program to encourage new businesses to come to the downtown area.

ncannada@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6680



SAVANNAH BLAKE | THE JOURNAL

Seneca businesswoman Mary Tannery hopes to turn the former Green's Drapery building downtown into an events center and four Airbnb units.

Green's Drapery building at 114 N. Walnut St. for the project. She had been approved for \$60,000 in August 2018, but said the cost and scope of the project has changed.

The updated plan calls for about 4,000 square feet of event space on the main floor of the building at the intersection of North Walnut and East Main streets. On the second floor, four apartments are planned to be available as Airbnb units and could also be packaged with those who rent the events center. She said construction work is scheduled to be completed by mid-2020.



NORM CANNADA | THE JOURNAL

One Church was approved for a grant of up to \$13,000 Wednesday by the Seneca Improvements Corporation for its work to renovate the former United Way building on East North 1st Street in downtown Seneca.