Front Row **GREENVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

PHOTO PROVIDED

Cancer Survivor Park asks city for more money

BENJAMIN JEFFERS | STAFF
bjeffers@communityjournals.com

Greenville City Council kicked off the new year with a request from the Cancer Survivors Park Alliance for an additional $500,000 to begin the second phase of the Cancer Survivors Park.

City Council has already allocated more than $1.3 million for the park, which is funded through public-private partnerships. The park is on land along the Reedy River and between Church and Cleveland streets beside the Chamber of Commerce.

The new park will encourage more community members to go to that area of Greenville, which is sometimes seen as unsafe, said Diane Gluck, a cofounder of the alliance.

In November, Greenville County Council agreed to contribute $500,000 of hospitality funds toward the project.

Gluck told council that creating the park has been a "long process fraught with many obstacles" and the additional money will fill a funding gap created by unexpected overages.

The creation of the boardwalk alone ballooned from a budgeted $750,0000 to $1.3 million, and despite earlier soil samples in the area of the boardwalk, builders encountered impenetrable soil and had to pay a company $750 per hour for 250 hours to drill through solid rock, she said. The path of the boardwalk also had to be altered to avoid cutting trees, which meant adding more railings, and elevation changes required additional handicap railings, she said.

"What we learned was that even when we thought we did all of our homework, there's just a lot of variables that came up and that we need to make sure that we have enough contingency to deal with," Gluck said.

Representatives from Cancer Survivors Park Alliance say they have raised $4 million from private and corporate donors.

The full cost of the park is expected to be $7.5 million, Gluck said.

She said the park will provide the city with a "significant return on investment." If the city approves the additional $500,000 the organization is asking for, Gluck said they won't request any more funds from City Council.

The additional funding would be used for phase two of the project that is set to go from March until the end of 2016.

The second phase will include improving entryways into the park, including a handicapped-accessible walkway from the Chamber of Commerce parking lot. It will also include a new bridge over the Reedy River and creating paths and other infrastructure.

"You've helped us build a boardwalk and a bridge, and now we ask you to help us build a park," Gluck told councilmembers.

The additional funding for the park would come from the hospitality tax. Council will vote on whether to approve the additional funds in an upcoming meeting.

Work on the park began in 2013 and is expected to be completed by 2018.

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