

City officials accept corporate money to renovate courthouse

BY MICHAEL GORDON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19TH 2015



The courthouse renovations will cost more than \$300,000.

Thu, 20 Aug 2015 01:14:04 GMT — Gaylord city officials and the Otsego County Economic Alliance accepted a \$20,000 grant from the Consumer TMs Energy Foundation Wednesday. That money will go towards a project to renovate and beautify the front lawn of the Otsego County Courthouse.

Many Gaylord residents are concerned that the project will end up costing tax payer money that could be put to better use elsewhere.

"Their going to be using county tax dollars to be beautifying a very small portion of the county and I feel like there are other places in the county where we could better use and better utilize spending county taxpayer dollars," said former county commissioner Tammy LaBoeuf. The courthouse project will cost more than \$300,000 and even with the grant from the Consumers Energy Foundation, about \$230,000 taxpayer dollars will be used to fund the renovations.

Supporters of the project say the renovations will bring a much needed face lift to the courthouse and that it will help revitalize the downtown area.

New sidewalks, water features and a power station for cell phones and laptops will be just a few of the planned renovations.

Otsego County Administrator John Burt says that accepting money from a private corporation to help fund the project does not represent a conflict of interest.

"I think that's good government trying to pull in outside partners to bring in outside funding to make the project happen," said Burt.

The renovations are set to begin the first week of September and be completed by early October.