

Remains of Dodgetown to be preserved in Lee

By Derek Gentile
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LEE — The Berkshire Natural Resources Council is beginning a fund drive to try to preserve about 700 acres of property on Chestnut Street in the historic Dodgetown area of Lee.

Along with preserving the scenic vistas of the property and the existing wildlife, the proposed conservation restrictions would prevent development and the degradation of the old stone walls and cellar holes left in Dodgetown, Lee's earliest settlement, said Theodore "Tad" Ames, executive director of the BNRC.

Bought for 100 pounds

According to local historians, a group of about 50 families from Cape Cod, seeking refuge from the pre-Revolutionary War turmoil around Boston, began a westward migration in the mid-1700s. Over 17 years, the families came to a high valley in the present township of Lee, settling on land that they had purchased for

100 pounds in British sterling.

The area became known as Dodgetown. Presently, a collection of cellar holes, stone walls and ancient paths remain to mark the presence of the early pioneers.

Ames said the BNRC was pursuing the conservation of two parcels on Chestnut Street. One is owned by Creative Building Solutions, a local developer, and the other is owned by the Horace W. Davis Realty Corp.

Under a plan already approved by the owners of the two parcels, BNRC plans to purchase 104 acres owned by Creative Building Solutions. After acquiring a conservation easement on that property, Ames said, BNRC will convey that parcel to Davis Realty Corp. in exchange for a conservation easement on an abutting 600-acre parcel.

The two properties form a "bridge" between land on Lander Road already preserved by

DODGETOWN, continued on B4

Dodgetown parcels in Lee are saved

DODGETOWN from B1

BNRC and October Mountain State Forest, Ames said.

The overall plan represents a compromise between the owners of the two parcels, said Ames. Creative Building Solutions had initially planned a 10-lot development. Davis Realty objected to the development and was planning to block the development in court.

Under the brokered agreement, Creative Building Solutions will confine its development to a two-acre parcel and a total of 704 acres will fall under a conservation restriction.

Ames credited the Creative Building Solutions developers, Linda Shafiroff and Sarah Stiner, and their partner, Dale Culleton, for their role in the project, as well as the members of the Davis family who make up Davis Realty.

Placed in a trust

The Davis land was purchased in 1930 by Horace W. Davis, said Ames. It was eventually placed into a trust after Davis' death for the continued enjoyment of the

Davis descendants.

"They're organized as a corporation, but what we're really talking about is a family, more than 100 descendants of Horace W. Davis," said Ames.

With the two property owners satisfied, said Ames, the next task will be to raise about \$60,000 for the purchase of the Creative Building Solutions property. Ames said the three Creative Building Solutions developers "were very cooperative" and came way down on the selling price of the property.

"We're already halfway there," said Ames. "We've had 60 or 70 donations, including a generous sum from Crane & Co. It's really a tremendous bargain."