

## PEC closes on latest Town-to-Trail tract in Gordonsville

### Market St. parcel connects Verling Park to GVFC fairgrounds

With contributions from local foundations and community members, the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) has acquired the final piece of property needed to create park connectivity between Verling Park and the Gordonsville Volunteer Fire Company fairgrounds.

Tuesday, Sept. 15, PEC officially closed on the 0.85-acre parcel at 304 Market Street, at a sale price of \$236,000. This property, along with another PEC-owned parcel at 204 Allen Street, Gordonsville-owned Verling Park and

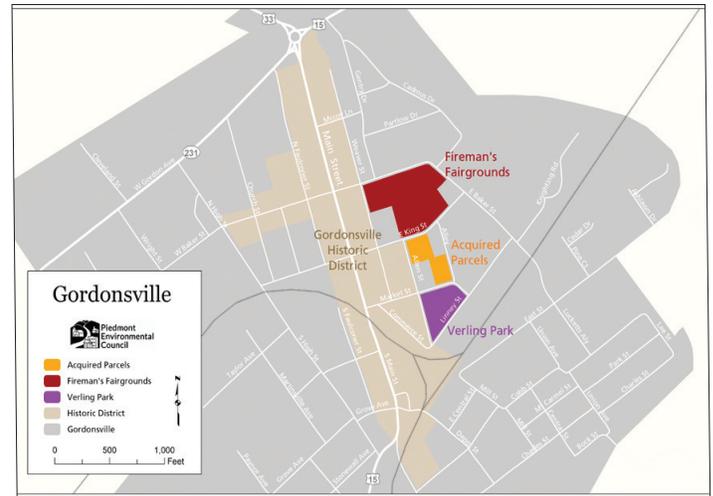
Dix Memorial Pool, and the fire company's fairgrounds represent nearly 10 acres of outdoor event and recreation space in the heart of the community.

The next steps in the process, according to PEC Field Representative Peter Hujik, include initiating with partners a park design process that includes public input, using the subsequent park design to shape a public access easement on the PEC parcels, gifting the two PEC-owned properties to the Town of Gordonsville, and attracting funding to develop the park according to the design.

“Successfully completing the acquisition phase of this project has been very rewarding. The acquisitions demonstrate renewed community interest in local parks and build upon the legacy of community members who worked to establish Verling Park and the fireman's fairgrounds,” Hujik said. “I'm grateful for all who pulled together to make this happen. With the town's effort to expand Verling Park to an entire block and the recent PEC acquisitions, updating the park is truly a community endeavor.”

Philip and Tracy Black, the former owners of the Market Street parcel, added, “We have good memories of raising our children across from Verling Park, where they especially enjoyed the swings. We were planning to hold onto our property for another year, but when we learned how it would be used to expand the park, we decided to move forward with the sale. We look forward to returning to walk the land we called home for over 15 years.”

A spokesperson for the Manning Family Foundation, which provided the lead gift toward the acquisitions,



said, “The Manning family developed a special relationship with Gordonsville, since the town served as home for a family business for many years. With outdoor recreation playing an essential role in our health and well-being, especially during Covid, we're pleased to play a lead role in launching the

Town-to-Trail initiative. The park already is well-used, and we're confident that the park network will become a vibrant place.”

Charlotte Dammann, associate broker with McLean Faulconer, who donated her brokerage services and negotiated the PEC acquisitions, said, “The park expansion effort in Gordonsville is an exciting initiative. More park space will benefit the community on so many levels, from connecting and updating existing public spaces to enhancing the overall quality of life. I was pleased to be involved and to have the opportunity to contribute.”

An expanded and refurbished Verling Park has been a vision for Town-to-Trail, a grassroots collection of friends,

neighbors and local businesses who began working together with The Piedmont Environmental Council in 2017 to renew local parks and develop trails. During several public meetings at that time, residents expressed an interest in a more functional park that serves the whole community. By adding to the

walkability of neighborhoods and towns, parks, trails and sidewalks help weave communities together and create a strong sense of place, according to Hujik.

Dan Gregg, owner of Grelen Nursery and contributor to the initiative, remarked, “The Town-to-Trail effort is well-organized and effective. Like most small towns, Gordonsville has limited resources, especially during this trying time. Updating the park will not be possible without the generosity of community members.”

In addition to the Manning Family Foundation, more than 15 businesses and organizations and well over 100 individuals have supported the Town-to-Trail initiative to date.