

Ledbetters to donate 'Rome's Central Park' back to the city

Diane Wagner December 18, 2017



Dec, 24, 2016. The view from Riverside Parkway of property closed on by Ledbetter Properties in Rome. At that time, Robert Ledbetter Jr. said he hoped ground could be broken for a shopping center on approximately 8 acres before the end of 2017. More than 70 acres straddling Burwell Creek will be put into a conservation easement.

(Doug Walker, RN-T)

The Ledbetter Family is donating back to the city of Rome as greenspace the 80 acres of property off Riverside Parkway they bought a year ago.

“This is a mind-blowing event,” Mayor Jamie Doss said Monday after the city commission approved some contractual details.

As Riverside Parkway Partners, LLC, the local developers purchased the land on the corner of Turner McCall Boulevard for a retail center. The \$600,000 buy, in December 2016, followed more than 10 years of environmental review that cost the company a little over \$1.3 million.

Under a draft contract, subject to attorneys’ review, the property will be “used solely as greenspace for the benefit of the citizens of Rome and Floyd County” and to house the existing city public works complex. It may not be used for commercial development.

Terrell Shaw, chairman of the citizens' group Save Rome's Central Park, said the Ledbetters had already compromised to leave some of the acreage undeveloped. The donation of the entire parcel, he said, is something he couldn't have envisioned.

"Our grandchildren's grandchildren will have a beautiful green central park in the middle of a much larger Rome, and the Ledbetter family made it possible," Shaw said.