

Board to decide fate of 1795 house

By TRINA GOETHALS
Staff Writer

The fate of Mount Atlas, a manor house built in 1795, located in northwestern Prince William County off Waterfall Road, rests in the hands of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors and the decision it will make Tuesday night.

A deed of gift and easement was granted to the county by former owner Barton Padgett on

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If the board decides to let the gift expire, the house would be returned to the estate's administrator, who has notified the Planning Commission that the property will be put up for sale later this spring.

**HISTORIC SITE FILE: MOUNT ATLAS
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
REILIC/Bull Run Res Lib Manassas, VA**

Nov. 4, 1999. The gift included the house alone, and not the land on which it stood. On April 17, 2000, the county was notified by the estate's administrator, appointed by Padgett, that there was a one-year time allotment for the house to be removed from the site.

With a little over two weeks left before that time limit expires, the supervisors' vote will determine if the entire property, a parcel of more than three

The board could also vote to purchase the existing property. According to the county's assessed value, the property and manor would have a price tag of \$244,800.

"I won't be upset as long as [the board] makes the decision that they think is right," Gaskill said. "We (the Historical Commission) are very interested in preservation and protection of property. But, everything that is old is not necessarily historic. I

acres that contains the house and another one, should be purchased by the county or if the home should stay at its current location and be surrendered by the county. The house could also be professionally taken apart, at the county's expense, and placed at another location.

Mount Atlas is a two and one-half story frame house and is representative of late 18th/early 19th century manor

would like to stay balanced between economic development and preservation."

Gaskill said the most important part of the home has already been preserved. Gaskill says the artifacts that the commission found inside Mount Atlas have the most meaning and historical value to the community.

Inside the home, which was owned by the Padgett and the Gosson families, was where the commission found boxes of let-

houses of the northern Piedmont region.

The house, which has a Virginia Landmarks registration, has been deemed "one of the finest and least-altered examples of late Georgian domestic architecture in Prince William County," by the National Register of Historic Places.

However, no funding was available to the county from the estate's administrator, and it would cost the county \$40,000

ters and papers that name families living in Prince William in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Jewelry, clothes, possible World War I uniforms and civil war artifacts were all located within the manor.

"Sentimentally [the Historical Commission] would like to keep the house, but we know we may not be able to do that," Gaskill said.

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to move, dismantle, label, transport, and store the building, with an additional \$15,000 to clean the site.

"It would be a drain on the county to move the house," said Prince William County Historical Commission Chair Lillian Gaskill. "I would like to see money spent to promote what we have now and bring that up to par."

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