

Board of County Commissioners

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News Release

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For Immediate Release

Forest Conservation variance request denied

Other options would eliminate need for variance

November 13, 2007 – Hearing Officer Steven D. Powell today denied a request from Carroll County Government for a variance to the Carroll County Forest Conservation Ordinance that would have allowed for the harvest of timber at Carroll County Regional Airport. In his decision, Mr. Powell writes that staff should have considered other options:

“The Board of County Commissioners as a matter of policy prefers that all County projects comply with the strict terms of federal, State and County law and that variances be sought in only the most extraordinary of situations. In this case, I believe staff may comply with County law through release of easement and afforestation elsewhere which would obviate the need for a variance.”

The County’s Chief of Administrative Services, Cynthia Parr, requested the variance on September 12, 2007, for the timbering of 3.75 acres of trees in a Forest Conservation Plan easement. Those trees were part of approximately 6 acres that need to be harvested before the Federal Aviation Administration will allow operation of a light system designed to increase safety during landing of aircraft.

Mr. Powell, the County’s Chief of Staff, suggested that the Forest Conservation Easement be released, an alternate site for reforestation be designated so that the harvest can take place. “I believe that the County will actually achieve an overall enhanced environmental benefit in greater harmony with the purposes and intent” of the County’s Code.

Staff has 30 days to appeal the decision, if it should choose to do so, to the Commissioners or to an appeals board appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

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