

# Christ Church Road “Clearcut”

Presented to: Lancaster County  
Board of Supervisors

Date: 27 October 2005

# “Clearcut” Photos

- Christ Church Is County’s “Signature Historic Landmark”
  - “Clearcut” is approximately 150 yards / 1 block away
  - Christ Church Foundation (Robert Cornelius, Executive Director – “buying surrounding parcels to avoid such adverse impacts”)
  - Desire “Historic District” designation to protect Christ Church as historic building and site
  - Supporting letter re need for buffer requirement sent to County by Executive Director

# “Clearcut” Description

- 10.22 Acres at Intersection of VSHs 222 (to Weems) and 646/Christ Church Road (see photos 1 thru 4)
- No Buffer Along VHS 222 or 646
- No Clean-up of “Slash”
  - Photos 5 & 6 --View from opposite corner across the Road (222 to right; 646 on left)
  - Photo 7 -- Timbered by Southern Timber for Owner (Donald G. Blackwell of Ettrick, VA)
  - Photo 8 – Across 222 towards Christ Church
  - Photos 9 to 11 -- Corner along 222 from Weems direction

# “Clearcut” Description

- Photo 12-14 – From Weems end of “Clearcut” towards 646 (Vehicles from Christ Church)
- Photos 15-17 – “Slash” Covering Entire Area to Heights of 6+ Feet
- Photo 18 – Car Parked in Southern Timber “Cleared” Area across 222 at Intersection
  - Sharon Baptist Church Graveyard in Background
  - Mr. Blackwell Owns 2 acres on that Corner
- Photos 19-20 – Sharon Baptist & Graveyard

# Property Description

- 10.22 Acres -- Zoned R-1 (Residential)
  - Tax Map Parcel: 27 262
  - Land Value: \$24,400
  - Owner: Donald G. Blackwell; 3403 South Street; Ettrick, VA 23803
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- 2.0 Acres -- Across Intersection (Sharon Baptist)
  - Tax Map Parcel: 27 262A
  - Land Value: \$4,000

# State of Virginia

## Department of Forestry (DOF)

- Require 3 Days Notice of Intent to Timber
- Require Timberers to Adhere to State Standards & Inspect for Compliance
  - No Cutting within 50' of Streams
  - Environmental & Forestry Practice Assurance
  - Regional Forester: Mr. Rich Steensma (Kilmarnock)
- But, State DOF Rules Do Not Require:
  - Buffer Areas
  - Clean-Up of “Slash”
  - Re-Seeding

# County Ordinances re Timbering

- None Currently Exist – except for de facto requirements associated with Building Permits, Plans of Development, etc.

**In Lancaster County -- There Is No Protection against “Clearcuts”–  
from R-1 to C-1**

- \* No Buffer Requirements**
- \* No “Slash” Clean-Up Requirements**
- \* No Re-Seeding Requirements**

Note: A 75' Buffer Would Reduce Timber Harvest by about 20% for the Christ Church “Clearcut” (Road on 2 borders); a 50' Buffer by 15%. “Timbering” Yields about \$1,000/acre to Owner

# Recommendations

- Our Citizens and the Community Ask You to Amend existing County Zoning Ordinances to Add “Timbering” Requirements that Will Protect and Preserve:
  - Individual Property Values
  - Historical Resources – Christ Church
  - Cultural Resources – Sharon Baptist Church
- Many Counties Have Incorporated “Timbering” into their Zoning Ordinances or Permitting Processes:
  - James City Amended its Ordinances adding “Timbering” Requirements
  - York’s Uses Forest Management Standards to cover “Timbering”
  - King William covers “Timbering” via Land Disturbance Permit Process

# Specific Recommendations

- Use James City County as Model -- Incorporates Requisite Features:
  - Establishes “Timbering” Regulations in standalone Chapter (Incorporates by Reference) and Allows “Timbering” as “Permitted Use” in all Zoning Areas -- except A-1 where requirements do not apply
  - Does Not Apply to any “Timbering” associated with Activities Covered by Existing County Processes – building permits, site plans, subdivision plans, etc.
  - Does Not Apply to “Timbering” Outside a Required 75’ Buffer along all Roads
    - I.e., No County Reviews/Approvals Are Necessary Unless “Timbering” Occurs within 75’ Buffer Area
    - Minimizes Burden (and Resources) on Planning Director

# Specific Recommendations (Cont'd)

- Establishes Excellent “Guidelines” for Review of Modifications re Clearing within 75’ Buffer:
  - Alternative Plan Provides Equivalent Measures
  - Retains Rural Character of Property
  - Buffer Not Necessary Due to Site’s Physical Conditions/Topography, etc.
  - Provides Guidelines for Partial “Timbering” into Buffer with Discretion Given to Planning Director
  - Provides County Processing Time of 14 Days to Approval/Disapproval of “Timbering” Application
- Copy of Recommended Model Provided – also on James City County Web Site with “Adopted” May ’96

# Next Steps

- Board to Ask Planning Commission to Review this Presentation -- Modify the James City “Timbering” Ordinance “Model”
- Deliver Proposed Draft “Timbering” Ordinance with Recommendations to BOS:
  - Within 90 Days (Jan ‘06 Meeting)
  - Include Implementation Plan (Public Hearings)
- FOLC Agree to Assist PC in Drafting Ordinance (POC Bill Warren @ 435.9918)