

Supervisors deny permit for wood recycling site in eastern Albemarle County
written by Newspark Team | March 17, 2009

The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors has unanimously voted against a special use permit (SUP) that would allow a wood recycling plant to operate in the Keswick area. They did so at their meeting on March 11, 2009.

They followed recommendations from the Planning Commission

, County planning staff, and over 20 residents from the surrounding area who came to speak at the public hearing.

Mark Keller presented for Central Virginia Recycling on behalf of the applicant. The requested facility would process unwanted wood scraps into mulch. He emphasized how important a wood recycling facility would be to Albemarle County and referenced a number of studies purporting to show that the impact of the site would not exceed acceptable levels for state requirements.

“We did a query for heavy industrial sites, knowing that we need somewhere above 12 or 13 acres, and we could not find a vacant site within the county,” Keller told the Board. As such, he felt the rural areas were the only possible location available.

Members of the public who came to speak saw the matter differently. Residents brought up the issues of excessive noise levels, unpleasant odors and dust, potential public health concerns, adding to the traffic burden on Route 250, and groundwater and soil contamination from dyes that would be used to color the mulch. Numerous speakers raised concerns about mulch catching on fire, an occurrence they claimed is not uncommon for such facilities. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Supervisors did not spend much time on discussion before voting to deny the permit.

“We would benefit as a community from having a facility like this in our midst [but] not in this location,” said Chairman

David Slutzky

(Rio). Supervisor

Sally Thomas

(Samuel Miller) pushed this idea further.

“This is a failure of our rural policy,” she said. “You ought to be able to have something like this in the rural areas, but this isn’t a rural area. This is a residential area, and in this case the residents were there first.”

Daniel Nairn