

February 13, 2026

TO: Three Forks Zoning and Planning Board

FR: Randy Carpenter
Planning Consultant to the City of Three Forks

RE: Conditional Use Permit application

Name of Applicant: Richard Clarke

Hearing Date: February 19, 2026

Application Request:

Location: MINOR SUB 466, S26, T02 N, R01 E, Lot 3, ACRES 0.71

Zoning: Neighborhood Highway Business

Background:

Richard Clarke has applied for a Conditional Use Permit for a firewood processing facility at the intersection of Highway 2 and West Grove Street (abutting the Dollar Store to the south).. He wished to cut semi loads of logs into firewood length. The firewood would be sold onsite or delivered.

The lot is about 31,799 square feet (.73 acres) in size. The lot is currently vacant.

The surrounding zoning and land uses are:

- To the south: Residential-Airport Influence (R), residential
- To the north: Neighborhood Highway Business (NHB), commercial
- To the east: Residential (R), residential
- To the west: Neighborhood Highway Business (NHB), commercial; Public Lands Institutional (PLI), Three Forks Rodeo

According to the application, he has started building a 6.5 foot wooden fence around the facility. He stated that “once sawdust gets between 3 inches and 2 feet on the ground, I will haul excess to the dump.”

Staff Report:

Section 11-12-2 of the City of Three Forks Zoning Ordinance identifies the approval criteria to be used for Conditional Use Permits, as follows:

- A. The use conforms to the objectives of the Growth Policy and the intent of the Zoning Ordinance.

This application would be considered as a “Wholesale distributors with on premises retail outlets, provided warehousing is limited to commodities which are sold on the premises.” This use is a conditionally permitted use within the NHB district.

- B. Such use will not adversely affect nearby properties or their occupants.

Staff is quite concerned that the proposed use would adversely affect the adjoining land properties and their occupants, especially the residential uses to the south and east of the property. The facility would almost certainly emit significant noise, and would likely generate serious particulate matter (fine sawdust) that could drift onto abutting properties. While the applicant stated that he would remove sawdust from the property when it gets between 3 inches and 2 feet deep, it is likely that before he can do so, wind could pick up and blow sawdust over his fence and onto abutting properties.

- C. Such use meets density, coverage, yard, height, and all other regulations of the district in which it is to be located, unless otherwise provided for in this Title.

The applicant did not provide a plan showing where the facility would be located providing parking and loading spaces.

The applicant stated that the cut firewood for sale would be either sold on site or delivered. If the finished product is sold on site, the applicant would have to produce a plan that showed customer parking. If the product is not sold on site, the applicant would have to show where employee parking would be located.

The applicant would have to also show how the uncut logs would be unloaded on the property, and how it would be loaded onto either customer vehicles or his delivery vehicle.

- D. Public hearings have been held, after the required legal notice has been given and the public has been given a chance to be heard upon this matter.

Public hearings have been appropriately announced and scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM with the Planning and Zoning Board. Public testimony and written comments will be taken and considered at each public hearing.

Conclusion:

Staff recommends denial of this conditional use permit application, given concerns about impacts on adjoining properties. If the application is approved, the applicant would have to produce a plan showing off-street parking and loading.