

Lindsay Darden

From: mwarrior96@aol.com
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 8:15 PM
To: Lindsay Darden
Cc: Mark Gebhart
Subject: Opposition to Urban Firewood proposal

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Hello,

My name is Mike Ferguson, and I live at 11570 West Lane, in the Corral Valley neighborhood off Highway 94, 5 miles east of Colorado Springs with my wife Rachelle and our three children. I am writing on behalf of myself and the Ferguson families, who own three properties in Corral Valley at 11570 West Lane, 970 Corral Valley Road, and 11380 West Lane. I am also writing as the Ranch Manager and representative for Waldo Morris (Waldo Morris WHR, LLC), also known as The Crazy Horse Ranch, which is directly opposite Highway 94 from the proposed Urban Firewood location of 11556 Highway 94. I am writing to voice our absolute OPPOSITION to the proposed retail business, operation, and relocation of the Urban Firewood business.

I was born, raised, and continue to live in the Corral Valley neighborhood. Our three children are the third generation to call the beautiful valley home. Corral Valley is a very unique and treasured location not only by its residents, but now world-wide with the discovery of many archaeological and paleontological resources as well as those waiting to be discovered. As the Ranch manager for other local ranches within two miles, Corral Valley is home to mule deer, antelope, coyotes, golden eagles, great horned owls, barn owls, whippoorwills, and many ground-nesters and ground-feeding birds that reside and live in the grasses and protection of the fields including killdeer, dove, quail, and several others. This proposed firewood location would impact the wildlife in a negative way, and is not what we want to welcome families that are coming to enjoy the Corral Bluffs Open space, just a short distance north!

I would like to point out some discrepancies and flat out lies in the application by Mr. Joseph Yost. The properties around the proposed location are not in "extreme disarray". Everyone keeps their properties neat, clean, and mowed. There is an older arena nearby to his east, which houses some animals. To the west is a property owned by a very nice gentleman and neighbor, Joseph Wojdyla, which Mr. Yost falsely claims is an "unregistered repair shop". Mr. Yost's outrageous accusations and description of our neighborhood was a slap in the face to everyone that I have spoken with in the neighborhood. The dump is miles further east, as is the racetrack and other properties mentioned. The crest of the hill just east of Corral Valley Road helps create a peaceful valley with less than 30 homes and helps separate our quiet residential community from the loud and busy businesses further to our east..

Speaking personally, one of our children has severe asthma, and the smoke from the business burning the scrap wood/bark would be an extreme health hazard to her, as smoke tends to settle here in the valley. Also, my father is on oxygen full time and suffers from COPD, which smoke would be detrimental to the health and well being of both. I was told that Urban Firewood currently has a permit to burn, and his current neighbors have described the smoke as a constant "camp fire" to walk through. Furthermore, our neighborhood is not in an actual fire protection district. We have witnessed first hand the damage done by wild fires and the lack of resources. Typically multiple agencies respond, then fight over who is going to assume control of the fire. One of our neighbors lost his garage and belongings as a direct result of the fighting between agencies. The last thing we want to do is to introduce any type of outdoor burning to a windy and dry prairie. The cattle that graze the Wild Horse Ranch as well as all of the other local ranches rely on the grass in the nearby pastures. One fire would economically devastate those ranching families for years to come, as well as potentially impact the adjacent structures-our homes!

Mr. Yost also plans to install a 6' fence in front of the property to "mitigate the visual impact". Looking at the current location, there is no way possible to mitigate that unsightly eye sore!! With Highway 94 being elevated above the proposed location, a 6' fence will be of no consequence, as the thousands of passing motorists daily will be looking right over the fence. Also, his plan to add 15 willow trees in the front to "lessen the visual impact of our storage" further reiterates Mr. Yost's own understanding that his operation will be unpleasant to look at. Willow trees, being of the Salicaceae family, require large amounts of water, which we have very little of on the plains, especially with the wind we

have out here. Being a deciduous tree, this would only offer a visual screen after maturity at 10-15 years if they lived that long, and only during spring through fall before the trees lose their leaves.

The traffic associated with trucks bringing in logs, as well as customers and vehicles leaving would further add to this very dangerous stretch of Highway 94. Cars turning in and out would be subjected to rear-end accidents and or head on collisions. The proposed 6' fence would essentially create a snow fence, worsening driving conditions in that stretch of Highway 94, which is very prone to black ice during the winter and often results in multiple wrecks including head-on collisions in that exact same location!! Our neighborhood has already experienced being rear-ended at least a half dozen times between neighbors, and we literally experience close-calls daily!

Mr. Yost proclaimed that he has received "comments from our current neighbors of how clean and organized" the firewood lot is. I personally know some of his neighbors who did not wish to be identified for fear of retaliation. One of the major complaints is what a poor neighbor they have been. Parking trucks and trailers along one property and not listening to a neighbors concerns when approached. Another was the constant smoke and noise associated with the business. Mr. Yost stated that "there have been rare instances where we have had to work into the evening". I was told by some of his neighbors that there is often noise coming from their property in the evenings and weekends. While I have never met Mr. Yost personally, I know that we do not want his business in our neighborhood.

Mr. Yost stated that "currently the majority of properties are not used and are in pretty bad shape. The ones who are not operating unregistered repair shops or storage sites are using the land for farming (i.e cutting hay". That is completely false. These properties are residences with the exception of a couple, and there is not one single person farming hay!! We are residing in our residences and on our properties, enjoying the peace and quiet!! The only possible "unregistered repair shop" sprung up within the last year on the east side of Corral Valley Road at 11820 Highway 94. Coincidentally, this is the same property that initially opposed the proposed firewood business location, then decided they were unopposed if that meant they could rezone their property for a monetary gain. I would welcome Code Enforcement to visit this property to help address some of Mr. Yosts' concerns about unregistered auto repair shops! One only has to look at the current location of Urban Firewood to witness the lack of vegetation, fire hazards, and the unsightly appearance of the property.

My wife Rachelle and I went door to door polling our Corral Valley neighbors. There is an overwhelming opposition to this proposed firewood operation and business. Aside from Mr. Yosts property at 11556 Highway 94, 28 out of the 29, or (97%), vehemently oppose this proposal!! My wife also put together a visual representing each property owner. The remaining property as I mentioned above stated he would support it if it benefited him financially-not for the well being of the community. Between the lies and accusations, health affecting hazards and noise pollution, traffic safety, and not being conducive to a RESIDENTIAL community, on behalf of my family, my neighbors, and myself I request Mr. Yosts/Urban Firewood's proposal be DENIED.

Respectfully,
Mike and Rachelle Ferguson and kids
August 17, 2020

Bob and Maylois Ferguson