



COLUMBIA COUNTY

Planning and Zoning Department

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112 E. Edgewater Street
Portage, WI 53901

Public Hearing Item 1: Conditional Use Permit

Planning & Zoning Committee • February 3, 2026

Proposed Use:

Sawmill

Applicable Section(s):

12.105.02; Table 12.105.02(1); 12.125.08

Zoning District(s):

A-1 Agriculture

Property Owner(s):

Gass, Kim R; Gass, Susan K

Applicant(s):

Gass, Kim R; Gass, Susan K

Property Location:

Located in the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter and the Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 2, Town 12 North, Range 9 East

Town:

Pacific

Parcel(s) Affected:

77.02

Site Address:

W8047 State Highway 33

Background:

Kim and Susan Gass, owners, request the Planning and Zoning Committee review and approve a Conditional Use Permit for a sawmill on the above-described parcel. Parcel 77.02 is 40 acres in size and fronts on State Highway 33. The property is zoned A-1 Agriculture and planned for continued Agricultural or Open Space land use. The southern half of the property is mapped as both wetland and floodplain. There are no steep slopes present. A sawmill is a conditional use within the A-1 district, per Section 12.105.02 of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance. Land use and zoning of adjacent properties follows:

Adjacent Land Uses and Zoning

Direction	General Land Use	Zoning
North	Agriculture	A-1 Agriculture
East	Agriculture, Single-Family Residence, and Wetland	A-1 Agriculture
South	Wetland	A-1 Agriculture
West	Agriculture, Single-Family Residence, and Wetland	A-1 Agriculture

Analysis:

The property owners are operating a sawmill on the above site. On April 30, 2025, Department Staff notified the property owners of the requirement to obtain a Conditional Use Permit for the sawmill use, per Table 12.105.02(1) of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance. Shortly thereafter, an application was submitted to the Department. The sawmill primarily involves storage, drying, and processing/woodworking of lumber. Operations are contained within three structures. These structures were designed to meet Wisconsin Building Code requirements for their intended uses. The business is operated by the property owner, and anticipated future growth would include one additional employee, for a total of two. Clients, which are typically business to business, visit the site by appointment only, and there is ample parking area near the shop for both the minimal client traffic and employees.

The majority of building space is dedicated to the storage of lumber. Lumber is also stored on the east and south sides of the group of shop structures. For drying, the operation utilizes a 50kW electric iDry Plus kiln. The facility only processes and dries lumber and does not offer finishing services such as painting or staining; therefore, odors or hazardous material concerns are not applicable to the request. Dust collection systems will be implemented to safeguard worker health, reduce fire risks, and improve equipment efficiency. The closest structure to the road is Building "B", which sits approximately 410 feet from the edge of pavement of State Highway 33. Access to the

site is from an existing shared driveway off of State Highway 33. Building B (24'x40') is a two-story woodworking shop and storage. Buildings C (210'x *varies*) and D (68'x49') are both single-story woodworking, kiln, and lumber storage facilities. Total indoor storage area across the three structures is approximately 6,840 square feet. Total woodworking and kiln drying area is approximately 3,340 square feet.

Sawmills within the A-1 District are also subject to the provisions of Section 12.125.08, Various Agricultural Related Uses. Applicable paragraphs are as follows:

- (1) This section shall apply to the following land uses, which are allowed as either permitted or conditional uses in certain agricultural and open space zoning districts.
 - (a) Road side stands.
 - (b) Agritainment/agritourism.
 - (c) Farm animal and commodity trucking service uses.
 - (d) Sales, distribution, mixing, blending and storage of agricultural supplies such as feeds, seeds, propane and fertilizer.
 - (e) Sales, service or repair of machinery and equipment used in agriculture.
 - (f) Saw mill, plane mill.

...

- (4) Display and storage of materials shall not obstruct pedestrian or vehicular circulation, including vehicular sight distances.

...

- (7) Within the A-1 district, such uses shall also:
 - (a) Be conducted by the owner or operator of the farm;
 - (b) Employ not more than four persons total;
 - (c) Not impair the current or future agricultural use of the farm or of other farmland that is within the A-1 district, legally protected from nonagricultural development, or both.

Town and State Action:

The Pacific Town Board met on October 21, 2025 and recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit with conditions.

Standards for Review:

The proposed use complies with the Review Criteria of Subsection 12.560.05(4) of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the Conditional Use Permit for a sawmill, subject to the adoption of the following recommended Findings, Conclusions, and Conditions.

Recommended Findings of Fact:

1. Upon review of the guidelines in Section 12.150.07(4) of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance, and with the explanation of the criteria in Attachment A of the Staff Report, the Committee finds the following:
 - a. Kim and Susan Gass are the owners of the subject property.
 - b. Kim and Susan Gass are the applicants for a Conditional Use Permit.
 - c. The owners of the property are operating a sawmill on the property without a Conditional Use Permit, in violation of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance.
 - d. The owners of the property are seeking a Conditional Use Permit for a sawmill within the A-1 Agriculture zoning district, in order to lawfully continue the sawmill operation on the property.
 - e. The property is already developed with a single-family residence and accessory structures on site.
 - f. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the proposed use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare of the occupants of surrounding lands.
 - g. The use will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be compatible, and be appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, and that

- such use will not change the essential character of the same area such that the use will substantially impair or diminish the use, value, or enjoyment of existing or future permitted uses in the area.
- h. The erosion potential of the site, based on topography, drainage, slope, soil type, and vegetative cover is minimal.
- i. There is no existing or anticipated water pollution including sedimentation, and no impacts on floodplain and wetlands.
- j. Access to streets and highways is suitable, and ingress and egress is designed to minimize traffic congestion and the potential effect on traffic flow.
- k. The Conditional Use shall conform to the standards of the applicable district(s) in which it is located.

Recommended Conclusions of Law:

1. The subject property is located in the Town of Pacific and is zoned A-1 Agriculture.
2. A sawmill is a conditional use within the A-1 Agriculture zoning district.
3. The proposed use is consistent with the purpose and intent of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance.
4. The A-1 Agriculture district uses are listed in Table 12.105.02(1).
5. Kim and Susan Gass are the petitioners for a Conditional Use Permit. The petition followed the procedures of Subsection 12.150.07(3) of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance.
6. The petitioners are proposing to operate a sawmill on the subject property, which is allowed as a Conditional Use under Table 12.105.02(1)
7. The Pacific Town Board has reviewed and recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit, with conditions, in accordance with Section 12.150.07 of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance.
8. The Columbia County Planning and Zoning Committee has the authority under Sections 12.150.03(2)(b) and 12.150.07 of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance to conduct public hearings, review, and decide on requests for Conditional Use Permits.
9. The standards of Section 12.125.08, Various Agricultural Related Uses, are applicable to the proposed sawmill.

Recommended Conditions for the Decision:

1. Hours of operation shall be Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturdays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.
2. Noise associated with the sawmill operation shall not exceed 65 dB at the property lines, at any time.
3. There shall be no more than 4 employees.
4. The processing and storage of raw or cut lumber shall be screened from public view within an enclosed building or by a solid fence or vegetative screen, meeting the requirements of Section 12.140.06(2)(d).
5. The operations shall only include the processing and drying of lumber. If finishing services are offered, proper hazardous waste disposal techniques shall be implemented and the Planning and Zoning Department and Town Clerk shall be notified of the revisions, along with waste disposal plans.
6. Dust collection systems shall be implemented in all woodworking spaces.
7. Site shall be developed in accordance with approved site plan and any applicable ordinances.
8. Signage shall comply with Section 12.145 of the Columbia County Zoning Code.
9. Any amendments to the approved site plan, including additions or changes in the size of the structures shall be referred to the Town for review and the Committee for action.
10. The property owners shall comply with and obtain all necessary permits as required by applicable federal, state, and local regulations.
11. The Planning and Zoning Department shall have the right of inspection for the purpose of determining compliance with this permit during normal working hours or upon reasonable notice outside of normal hours.
12. If the Planning and Zoning Committee finds that the review criteria of Subsection 12.560.05(4) the Columbia County Zoning Code, or the conditions stipulated in the Committee Decision are not being complied with, the Planning and Zoning Committee, after a public hearing, may revoke the Conditional Use Permit.

13. Any agreement(s) or condition(s) pertaining to this Conditional Use Permit between the Town of Pacific and Kim and Susan Gass are hereby incorporated as part of this Conditional Use Permit; however, the County is not responsible for enforcing said agreement(s) or condition(s), unless an individual point of the agreement(s) or condition(s) is specifically included above as a condition of approval. Any additional Town agreements or conditions are listed below. In the event that the Town submits a finding of noncompliance with any of the item(s) listed below, for which the County has not assumed direct enforcement authority, upon written request by the Town, the County reserves the right to review the Conditional Use Permit.

Section 12.150.07(4): Criteria for review of all Conditional Uses

Re: Public Hearing Item 1: Gass CUP

**Staff comments are italicized after each review item.*

Review Criteria. In reviewing the conditional use permit the Planning and Zoning Committee shall use the following as guides for making a decision.

- (1) The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the proposed use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare of the occupants of surrounding lands.
Issues which could be seen as having the potential to be detrimental appear to be able to be adequately mitigated by the application of conditions of approval.
- (2) The use will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be compatible, and be appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, and that such use will not change the essential character of the same area such that the use will substantially impair or diminish the use, value, or enjoyment of existing or future permitted uses in the area. *Operating within the conditions of approval will ensure that the proposed use will not substantially impair or diminish the use, value, or enjoyment of existing or future permitted uses in the area.*
- (3) The erosion potential of site based on topography, drainage, slope, soil type, and vegetative cover. *The development is existing; therefore, the potential for erosion is limited.*
- (4) The prevention and control of water pollution including sedimentation, and the potential impacts on floodplain and wetlands. *The site is already developed.*
- (5) The site has adequate utilities, including if necessary acceptable disposal systems. *A disposal system is on site for the existing home; however, it does not serve the sawmill; nor is a system required for the use.*
- (6) Access to streets and highways is suitable, and ingress and egress is designed to minimize traffic congestion and the potential effect on traffic flow. *Ingress and egress to the site is from an existing driveway located on a state highway. The level of activity from the proposed use will not create congestion or affect traffic flow as appointments are minimal.*
- (7) The Conditional Use shall conform with the standards of the applicable district(s) in which it is located. *The proposed Sawmill must comply with the conditions of approval as well as the standards set forth within the Columbia County Zoning Code.*



