



January 2016

3033 St. Croix Trail South
P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001

Afton to hold “Solar Power Hour” — JOIN US!

Afton City Hall ■ January 4, 2016 ■ 7:00 p.m.

The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) works with community partners to offer one-hour seminars to the public called Solar Power Hours. The Solar Power Hour explains how a photovoltaics (PV) system works, what to expect from a site assessment, potential cost and return on investment, qualified installers in the area, and available financial incentives.

MREA’s Solar Power Hour streamlines solar energy adoption for homes, businesses, and municipal buildings by delivering important educational information and connecting Afton residents to qualified local certified solar installers, manufacturers and suppliers that will help in simplifying the process for installing solar, while providing cost competitive pricing.



This Solar Power Hour opportunity is the first step towards offering residents and businesses assistance and information on understanding how solar energy can work for you by reducing dependency on fossil fuels.

Learn more about Frequently Asked Questions in the “Solar Power Hour Guide” on the City website under “City Commissions and Committees.” Hold your mouse on Planning Commission and go to “Reference Materials.”

This solar seminar is FREE OF CHARGE, thanks to support from the U.S. Department of Energy’s Sunshot Initiative.

Winter will be here SOON! (I’m pretty sure!)

Residents and businesses in the Village are reminded that all snow and ice must be removed from the public sidewalks within 24 hours after a snowfall. This is for the safety of our residents and visitors to our fair City.

Thanks for your cooperation!



Have a warm & cozy winter!

CITY MEETINGS

CITY OFFICE CLOSED

January 1 and 18, 2016

*In Observance of New Year’s Day
& Martin Luther King, Jr Day*

January 4, 2016

Planning Commission Meeting
Solar Power Hour
7:00 P.M.

January 19, 2016

City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

January 20, 2016

Heritage Preservation Commission
5:00 P.M.

January 20, 2016

Natural Resources & Groundwater
6:30 P.M.

*All meetings are held at City Hall
unless otherwise noted.*

CITY COUNCIL

<u>Mayor:</u>	Richard Bend	436-7684
<u>Ward 1:</u>	Bill Palmquist	308-0569
<u>Ward 2:</u>	Joe Richter	436-1819
<u>Ward 3:</u>	Stan Ross	436-1346
<u>Ward 4:</u>	Randy Nelson	436-2479

CITY HALL

Monday — Friday
9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.
651 - 436 - 5090

CITY WEBSITE

www.ci.afton.mn.us

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Animal Control	715-386-7789
Building Inspector	436-6469
Burning Permits	248-5103
Environmental Center	430-6655
Highland Sanitation	458-0043
Hillcrest Animal Hosp	484-7211
LSCV Fire Dept	436-7033
Sheriff’s Office	439-9381

EMERGENCY 911

Land Spreading of Septage — What is it & how does it impact the environment and me???

City staff and Council members have received a few inquiries from residents about the safety of land spreading of septage on farm fields in Afton. Septage is the sludge pumped from septic tanks where it has been pretreated by anaerobic biological processes. Land spreading of septage has always been allowed by federal Environmental Protection Act (EPA) rules and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) rules and regulations. Washington County adopted a revised septic ordinance in April 2015, codifying those regulations into the County ordinance. Cities in Washington County have one year to adopt the revised ordinance or to make amendments. Afton's City Council asked the Planning Commission to investigate the issue and make a recommendation as to whether the land spreading of septage should be limited or prohibited in Afton.

The Planning Commission requested that Washington County's Public Health and Environment Department make a presentation about the issue at their December meeting. County staff members, Jeff Travis and Girard Goder, explained the issues that have been studied and the permitting process that the county will use to administer the county septic ordinance.

As in the case of the concerns voiced about Afton's wastewater treatment system, concerns regarding the safety of land spreading of residential waste products, if not based on the best information, can lead to unreasonable fears. The Planning Commission has done an admirable job by obtaining the best information available on this topic. It will inform the Council when it comes time to make a decision on whether Afton will adopt the County's ordinance as written, or take some other action.

Here is a summary of the presentation by Washington County:

For those who don't care to read the details which follow, the presentation ended with the following general conclusions: Land spreading of septage is safer for humans and the environment than is land spreading of livestock waste. In Washington County, where it has long been practiced it has not caused any health or environmental concerns despite the fact that historically there were over 25,000 household septic systems and are now only 19,000. Companies engaged in land spreading of septage in Washington County are highly reputable and follow applicable federal Environmental Protection Act (EPA) rules and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) rules and regulations. The County ordinance is as restrictive as federal and state regulations, ensuring the safety of residents and the environment.

Now the details: A permit is required for land spreading of septage. In determining whether or not a permit will be issued, Washington County considers aquifer sensitivity, soil composition and depth, slope and soil analytics (does the soil need the nutrients septage will supply). The site must be zoned agricultural. Because of the rigid site requirements there are very few sites in Afton where spreading is permitted. The County issues the permits for a period of two years. Only one spreading is permitted under a single permit. The County will issue permits in conformance with the ordinance adopted by each municipality. If a municipality has additional restrictions or prohibits the land spreading of septage, the County issues permits accordingly.

Although federal and state rules permit other types of spreading, the County ordinance only permits the following: 1) injection below the soil surface; 2) incorporation by surface application followed by tilling into the soil within six hours; and, 3) surface application following pre-treatment with lime prior to application, which balances pH, killing pathogens (bacteria and viruses) and odor.

Potential dangers that are guarded against fall into three categories: chemicals and metals, medications and pathogens. Taking each in sequence, household chemicals do not settle out in septage, but rather are dissolved and flow out into the drain field. Unlike industrial septage, residential septage contains few metals. Human medications do not settle into septage, unlike feedlot growth hormones which do, making animal waste more dangerous. In the case of pathogens, risk is eliminated by time, distance, lime treatment and limited access. Pathogens not pretreated with lime are eliminated in the soil by naturally occurring soil fauna.

Septage not spread is hauled at significant cost to the Metropolitan Waste Treatment Plant where, following payment of a fee, it is treated. Commissioners asked if the Washington County regulates the spreading in Afton of commercial fertilizer made from the Metropolitan Waste Treatment Plant's sludge and was told they do not because they do not have jurisdiction over commercial fertilizers used in Washington County. It was mentioned that several of the vendors handling septage in Washington County have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on the special equipment necessary to spread septage within the guidelines and that if one in particular could not spread septage on the land they themselves own and farm, they would incur the higher costs needed to purchase commercial fertilizer. Following spreading there are rigid restrictions to insure that crops are planted that make timely and proper use of the nutrients supplied to the soil. Food crops cannot be harvested until two years after the application.

Ah, the topics a Mayor has to consider... left to my own devices this isn't one I would have chosen. Let us know if you have any thoughts on this topic.

Happy holidays, Richard Bend

Planning Commission, December 7

- **Heard** a presentation by Washington County Public Health staff about the land application of septage which has been allowed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), but now has been codified into the revised Washington County Septic Ordinance, which was adopted in April, 2015. Cities have one year to adopt or revise the County ordinance. The County, according to each municipality's wishes, will be responsible for administering the permits, inspections, reporting and notification to cities of maintainers who wish to land spread septage.
- **Decided** to continue due diligence by reviewing the entire Washington County revised ordinance for discussion at the January 4 meeting. A Public Hearing on the County Septic Ordinance will be scheduled for the February 1, 2016 meeting.
- **Scheduled a "Solar Power Hour" for residents and businesses to attend at the January 4, 2016 Planning Commission meeting**, by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. They will present how solar systems work, outline the benefits and incentives, describe the installation process and talk about available financing options.

City Council Meeting, December 15

- **Heard** several residents speak of the benefits to having high speed internet provided to all residents of Afton.
- **Held** the 2016 Budget and Tax Levy Hearing. The proposed budget reflected the effort to expand and upgrade high speed internet access throughout the City, to provide additional funding for roadway maintenance and to fund the planned debt service payments related to the downtown improvement projects. City Council reduced the High Speed Internet line item of \$125,000 by \$50,000 and shifted \$75,000 to the Special Reserve Fund in order to eliminate the High Speed Internet line item. The Flood Control line item was reduced from \$4,000 to \$1,600 and \$2,400 was added to Cemetery Maintenance.
- **Approved** the final 2016 Budget in the amount of \$2,032,901.
- **Approved** the final 2016 Tax Levies in the amount of \$ 1,858,692.
- **Heard** the City Engineer report that the MPCA Sanitary Permit was received. Two projects will be bid in 2016: 1) Treatment site – Bid opening February 2, 2016; and, 2) Roadways, Levee, Collection System, Lift Stations and Forcemain – Bid Opening March 8, 2016. Engineers will be contacting affected residents for: Well variance concurrence for the sanitary sewer services for the MN Dept of Health permit; and, the low income verification process for grant funding. Residents are encouraged to respond, as there are potential financial benefits.
- **Approved** engineering items: 2016 City Engineer Rate Schedule; Cooperative Agreement with Washington County on the Afton Downtown Improvement Projects; the contract with Xcel Energy to extend three phase power service into the Downtown area, in the amount of \$9,904.28; the proposal from Wenck Associates for engineering services involving finalizing plans and specs, bidding, construction, and post construction engineering services, at a cost not to exceed \$220,000; and, Plans and Specifications and Authorizing Advertisement for Bids for the Wastewater Treatment System.
- **Approved** the Municipal Advisors Contract with Springsted, Inc.
- **Authorized** Amendment No. 3 to the DNR Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant.
- **Appointed** Lynn Danz Kaye to the Parks Committee.
- **Requested** additional quotes for replacement of carpet tiles for the City office and copier room and new tile flooring for the work room, hallway and restrooms. Approved installing new ADA handicapped compliant toilets in both restrooms for an amount not to exceed \$1,500.
- **Adopted** the 2012 Park Plan as drafted.

Downtown Improvement Projects Update

The MPCA has issued its permit for the wastewater collection and treatment system to serve the Old Village downtown area, and the City Council has approved plans and specifications and authorized advertisement for bids for the wastewater treatment system.

The City Council has also approved a cooperative agreement with Washington County for the downtown improvement projects, including the reconstruction of County Road 21 through the downtown area. Because the projects are interrelated in a number of ways, the cooperative agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of the City and the County regarding the projects, as well as how costs related to the projects will be shared between the City and the County.

City Office Staff News

Pat Joyce Retires

After nine years of dedicated service as the City's Office Assistant, Pat Joyce retired on December 15. Pat's upbeat attitude and helpfulness made a positive impression on the many who called or stopped in to City Hall with a question or concern. Pat's trademark greeting of "Top O' the Morning!" and his friendly way of helping people will be missed. We wish Pat a long, healthy and happy retirement.

New Office Assistant, Deb Meade, joins City Staff

The City recently welcomed Deb Meade as the new Office Assistant at City Hall. She replaces Pat Joyce who served in the same position for nine years until his recent retirement. Deb comes to us after a successful career at the state level that included administrative support, customer service and purchasing duties. She brings a friendly and helpful approach, strong organizational skills, attention to detail and experience in a broad range of computer applications. We are delighted that Deb has joined our staff team.



CITY OF AFTON
3033 ST CROIX TRAIL SO
P.O. BOX 219
AFTON, MN 55001



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PERMIT NO. 15

Valley Branch Library January Events

Library Closed January 1 and 18

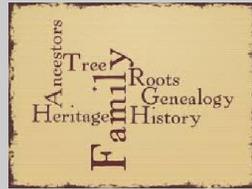
To register call 651-436-5882 or go online to:
<http://www.co.washington.mn.us/library>

Featured Events

Introduction to Internet Genealogy
Thursday, January 7, 12:30—2 p.m.

Introductory class focuses on Ancestry Library Edition and features a brief introduction to other recommended genealogy websites.

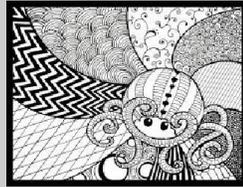
Please register.



Tangles and Doodles: Meditative Art
Wednesday, January 13, 1:00—3:00 p.m.

Learn the history of Zentangle inspired art, practice the five basic steps to making a Zentangle design, and make your own Zentangle image to take home. All supplies are provided.

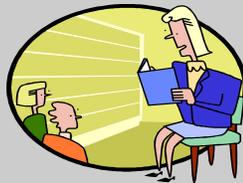
Please register.



Preschool Storytime

Mondays, January 4, 11 & 25
10:30—1:00 a.m.

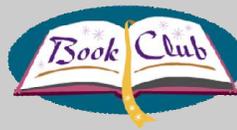
Pre-K & caregivers. Stories, songs and fingerplays help develop early literacy skills. **No registration required.**



Book Club

Thursday, January 28, 5:00—6:00 p.m.

This month's book is "Grand Opening" by Jon Hassler. Visit Valley Library to pick up a copy. Read the book, come, and discuss. **Open to all.**



PATRON
AFTON, MN 55001

View this newsletter
IN COLOR
on the city website.



*Please recycle this
newsletter after use.*

Learn about solar energy opportunities!!!

AFTON SOLAR POWER HOUR

Solar Power Your Home, Business, or Farm.
JANUARY 4, 2016

SOLAR POWER HOURSM

THIS FREE ONE-HOUR SEMINAR WILL EDUCATE HOMEOWNERS, SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS, AND FARMERS ON THE BENEFITS OF SOLAR ENERGY. SOLAR POWER HAS NEVER BEEN MORE AFFORDABLE OR EASIER TO INSTALL. THIS SEMINAR WILL HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE PROCESS OF GOING SOLAR AND HELP YOU UNDERSTAND ALL OPTIONS.

HERE'S WHAT WE'LL COVER:

- Basics of a solar photovoltaic (PV) system
- Market trends
- Step-by-step process to determine if solar is right for you
- Economic benefits
- Meet with the highest quality local solar installers

January 4, 2016
7:00 - 8:00 PM

Afton City Hall | 3033 St. Croix Trail South, Afton, MN 55001
7:00 PM | January 4, 2016

**FREE
&
OPEN
TO THE
PUBLIC!**



Happy New Year!



**World
Peace
Begins**



With You & Me!