



**DECEMBER 2017**

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



**Friday December 1st - Candlelight Night, 5pm-9pm**  
**Saturday December 2 - Family Day, 9am-4 pm**

Afton will be transformed into a winter wonderland with Horse & Wagon rides, Strolling Carolers, Christmas Tree lighting, Artist Gift Market, Children's Crafts, festive food & drinks and more.

**Budget and Tax Hearing**

*All are Invited to Attend Afton's 2018 Budget and Tax Hearing*  
**7:00 pm, Tuesday, December 19, 2017**  
Afton City Council Chambers  
3033 St Croix Trail South  
Afton, MN 55001

The hearing is an opportunity for the public to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the proposed budget.

**The 2018 Proposed Budget is available at  
City Hall or on the City's website at:  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)**  
(Click the top tab: "City Finance Information")

**Downtown Improvement Project Update**

The final wear course of pavement has been completed on St. Croix Trail and Afton Boulevard, as well as on all local streets, with the exception of the eastern portions of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street is planned to be paved by December 1. 32<sup>nd</sup> Street will not be paved until the spring of 2018. The boulevard restoration work along St. Croix Trail and Afton Boulevard, including grading of top soil and seeding, is planned to be completed by December 1. The seeding contractor has been given clear direction that they need to ensure the grass gets well established next spring. The installation of the decorative street lights along St. Croix Trail has been completed, with the exception of final electrical work, which is planned to be completed by December 1. Sanitary sewer work along the levee is complete. The sanitary sewer lift station and the wastewater treatment system are both operational and properties are now able to connect to the new sanitary sewer system.

**The City Office is Closed**  
**Monday, December 25**  
**Tuesday, December 26**  
**Monday, January 1**  
*In observance of the Holidays*

**CITY MEETINGS**

**December 4, 2017**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**December 5, 2017**

Natural Resources and Groundwater  
Committee 6:00 P.M.

**December 19, 2017**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**December 20, 2017**

Heritage Preservation Commission  
5:00 P.M.

**December 27, 2017**

Parks Committee  
6:00 P.M.

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

**CITY COUNCIL**

Mayor: Richard Bend 436-7684

Ward 1: Bill Palmquist 308-0569

Ward 2: Joe Richter 436-1819

Ward 3: Stan Ross 436-1346

Ward 4: 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](http://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 Dept 439-9381

## **A Letter from the Mayor ~ Private Open Space Protection**

Afton's open space, which is the primary reason for Afton's rural appearance, has historically been protected by three different methods: private large lot acquisition; non-profit large lot acquisition; and passage of city ordinances that prohibit small lots, protect environmentally fragile areas and restrict structure (buildings and roads) placement.

This month I'll discuss the first of these: private large lot acquisition.

Private land acquisition can be used by individuals by targeting not only the land they desire to protect, but also the specific attributes of that land. Afton residents have added to their land ownership to protect viewsheds, to insure continued rights to hunt, for privacy, for walking trails, and for horse and livestock pasturing. It is possible to acquire land and place a conservation easement on it while retaining only a specific attribute, for example the right to walk on it, to preserve a viewshed, to hunt, to build a residence to pasture livestock, or to preserve the land for farming use. Once protected by a conservation easement, the land can be sold subject to the conservation easement. There are of course complexities and costs, including selecting an easement holder and legal fees. For these reasons some in Afton have chosen to acquire land jointly, sharing structuring, transactional and acquisition costs.

Private acquisition has some unique advantages over the other two open space protection methods. When parcels change hands and are developed, structure placement changes can irritate neighbors even though new placements comply with set-back and other ordinance requirements. Similarly, permitted development resulting from minor and major subdivisions, including Preservation and Land Conservation Developments (PLCDs), can adversely impact views, traffic patterns and prized solitude enjoyed by neighbors. PLCDs can radically change existing land use. They can restrict neighbor's prior permissive use of private property (examples: hunting, walking, riding), change landscapes, alter viewsheds and increase local densities in areas of forty acres or more.

Private protection often achieves results that are more palatable, particularly to immediate neighbors. Adverse impacts from development that is permitted can be avoided by private acquisition followed by use of a conservation easement.

The greatest challenge to protective private acquisition, after land cost, is maintaining focus and effort to achieve initial acquisition. Developers are your competitors. They have expertise, persistence and experience in competing to acquire land. If you desire to protect land adjacent to your property in Afton, you must network with neighbors, remain vigilant for sudden opportunities to acquire, not be afraid to gently ask repeatedly, and work communally with residents whose goals align with yours.

I encourage all of you to look at the land around yours and talk to your neighbors. Let them know that you treasure their land use values and would like to someday protect if their circumstances change. Find out who among them might assist you in doing that and keep in contact. Educate yourself about the use of conservation easements and be prepared.

Hope to see all of you during Afton's Holiday events,

Richard Bend

### **Guided fitness hikes continue in Washington County Parks, next hike December 7**

Explore the Washington County Parks trail system with guided fitness hikes, the next of which is 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Thursday, December 7, at the Lake Elmo Park Reserve. The one-hour hikes involve a warm-up and fitness challenges along the way.

Meet at the Nordic Center. The Lake Elmo Park Reserve trails are a mix of turf, gravel, grass, snow, and pavement depending on trail conditions, time of year, and location.

These programs are free with a Washington County Parks vehicle permit (\$7/day or \$30/annual).

## November Meeting Highlights

### November 6, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting Highlights

#### *The Commission:*

- Held a public hearing for a minor subdivision application from Charlie and Danielle Wamstad at 1987 Manning Ave.
- Held a public hearing for a variance application from Duane and Jennifer Lenander at 12468 Meadow Bluff Trail.
- Reviewed updates in several sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

### November 21, 2017 City Council Meeting Highlights

#### *The Council:*

- Approved a Minor Subdivision Application for Charlie and Daniel Wamstad at 1987 Manning Ave.
- Approved a Variance Application for Duane and Jennifer Lenander at 12468 Meadow Bluff Trail.
- Approved a fee increase for Highland Sanitation
- Approved permanent installation of a security system for the wastewater treatment site
- Approved two liquor license renewals for 2018
- Approved withdrawal from the Gateway Corridor Commission
- Designated Shepard of the Valley as the official polling place for 2018 elections
- Approved demolition of the old public works garage
- Approved pay voucher No. 7 from Geislinger and Sons for the Downtown Improvement Project in the amount of \$921,207.69
- Approved pay voucher No. 5 from Park Construction for the 2017 Pavement Management Project in the amount of \$36,101.54
- Appointed Erin Smillie to serve on the Parks Committee
- Approved purchase of an office computer for city staff

## Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

### Saturday, December 16th

#### **Open Third Saturday 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Participate in programs, meet Belwin staff, explore the trails and connect with nature. NEW! One-Hour Guided Experiences at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. December topic: Signs of Winter. Free for members, \$10 for non-members

### Wednesday, December 20

#### **Winter Solstice Bonfire 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Short program at 7:45 p.m.**

Celebrate the Winter Solstice at Belwin with a roaring bonfire, singing and dance, warm cider, cookies, and night hikes to usher in the return of the light. Bring your family and friends to this event, and don't forget a mug for cider and a flashlight. RSVP via [www.belwin.org](http://www.belwin.org) or contact Belwin Program Manager Susan Haugh: 651-436-5189 x11, [susan.haugh@belwin.org](mailto:susan.haugh@belwin.org). Location: Belwin Outdoor Science Lower Classroom, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S. Open to everyone. Suggested donation: \$5 per car.

Not a member? Join online prior to the event to support our programs and enjoy everything we have to offer.

[www.belwin.org](http://www.belwin.org)  
**651-436-5189**

## Want to get involved in city decisions?

The Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC) is in need of additional members. The NRGC focuses on issues of environmental stewardship. Committee members attend area and regional meetings, particularly concerning the quality and quantity of water and other resources important to Afton. These issues are brought back to City Council with recommendations on actions. The Committee meets the first Tuesday of every month. **Applications are available on the city website or at City Hall.**



## Yellow Ribbon Alliance Lower St. Croix Valley

The Yellow Ribbon Alliance of the Lower St Croix Valley is looking for volunteers to represent the City of Afton. The Alliance unites all areas within a community to create a comprehensive network that connects and coordinates agencies, organizations, resources and employers for the purpose of proactively supporting Service members and military families. The group meets monthly. **For more information please call: Randy Kopesky 651-226-1434.**



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



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PERMIT NO. 15

**Valley Library calendar of events  
for December 2017**

**LIBRARY CLOSED:**  
DECEMBER 24 & 25 (Christmas)

Virtual Reality Demonstration  
Thursday, December 14, 4:00 - 5:00 PM  
All Ages

Family Storytime: Valley Library  
Mondays December 4, 11 & 18 , from 10:30  
AM - 11:00 AM. For all children and their fami-  
lies.

STEM Saturdays  
Saturday, December 16, from 10:30 AM - 11:30  
AM. Ages 7-14

DOG GONE READING with Legacy  
Tuesday, December 19, from 3:30 PM - 5:30  
PM. Children in grades K-7.

**Valley Branch Library**  
**380 St. Croix Trail South**  
**Lakeland, MN 55043**  
**651-436-5882**

**PATRON**  
**AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter

***IN COLOR***  
on the city website.



*Please recycle this  
newsletter after use.*

**Snow will be here  
SOON!**

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!***



**DID YOU KNOW.....**

**RECYCLING IS PICKED UP EVERY WEEK?!!**

By putting acceptable recyclable materials into your recycling bin instead of your trash bin, you...

**SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT...**by keeping excess trash out of landfills.

**SAVE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES...**by paying attention to recycling, your habits will change...you will start to look for products that have less packaging, or packaging that can be recycled, thereby using less of our natural resources.

**SAVE MONEY...**by recycling materials, you can switch your large trash bin for a smaller size trash bin -- call Highland Sanitation to make the switch! 651-458-0043.

