



**May 2020**

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

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) City Hall Procedures**

Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) City Hall remains closed to the public; essential city services will continue.

City Hall staff are working remotely and will check voicemail and email regularly. Please use the drop box outside of City Hall to deliver any permit applications, payments and documents. These can also be mailed.

**Staff Contact Information:**

Ron Moorse, City Administrator: 651-436-8957  
administrator@ci.afton.mn.us

Ken Johnson, Public Works: 651-436-5090, ext #102  
publicworks@ci.afton.mn.us

Duane Stensland, Building Inspector: 651-436-6469  
dstensland@comcast.net

Julie Yoho, City Clerk: 651-436-5090, ext #101  
jyoho@ci.afton.mn.us

### **COVID-19 City Council Meeting Process Changes**

The City Council meetings are being held virtually. This means that rather than Council members, staff and the public meeting in the Council Chambers, each of these groups participate via phone and/or on-line via the internet. Our priority remains to make the City Council meetings and the Council's actions as transparent as possible and provide residents the means to provide comments and input regarding all items on the meeting agendas, while protecting public health. Information on how to join the meeting will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.



### **Animal Owners Responsibility**

Residents are reminded that Section 6.2 of the city code does not permit animals to run loose within the city boundaries.

*No owner shall permit his animal to be at large in this City, but shall keep such animal under restraint at all times. Animals shall be prohibited in areas of public parks or upon public lands unless leashed at all times.*

*Restraint means an animal is on the premises of the animal's owner; obedient to that person's command when off the premises; within a private motor vehicle or controlled by a leash. An animal on the property of another without the consent of such property owner is at large and not under restraint.*

Please take precautions to restrain your animals and keep them safe!

### **CITY MEETINGS**

**All meetings of volunteer Commissions and Committees are CANCELED for May**

**May 19, 2020**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

Please see the adjacent article regarding COVID-19 City Council Meeting Process Changes, and watch for more information on the City website and the City Facebook.

### **CITY COUNCIL**

- Mayor: Bill Palmquist 651-308-0569
- Ward 1: Annie Perkins 651-592-3007
- Ward 2: Lucia Wroblewski 651-436-3982
- Ward 3: Stan Ross 651-436-1346
- Ward 4: Randy Nelson 651-436-2479

### **CITY HALL**

651-436-5090

### **CITY WEBSITE**

[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

### **IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

- Animal Control 715-220-1332
- Building Inspector 651-436-6469
- Burning Permits 651-248-5103
- Environmental Center 651-275-7475
- Highland Sanitation 651-458-0043
- Otter Lake Animal Care 651-426-8871
- Fire Dept 651-436-7033
- Sheriff's Dept 651-439-9381

**EMERGENCY 911**

## Notes from the Mayor

We have been dealing with the COVID-19 virus for more than a month now, including Governor Walz's stay at home order. As a result of that order, we held our first electronic council meeting in April. Thank you to our staff and everyone involved for making it a seamless and efficient meeting. As we move into May, we will continue to postpone our volunteer committees in-person meetings. When we have further guidance on the stay at home order, we will update our webpage and other social media accounts on how we will begin to resume our normal meeting schedules. In the meantime, our offices will remain closed and staff will continue to work remotely.

On the subject of staff, our office assistant Deb Meade announced that she will be retiring in May. Deb has been with us for 5 years and has been a great asset to our city. We will miss her years of experience, professionalism, and friendliness at city hall. Thank you, Deb, for all you have done for our city. We all wish you the best in this next chapter of life!

We have recently had several reports of illegal vegetative cutting in the Lower Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway district. The DNR is working with staff on this issue but I think it is a good time to go over the rules since some might not be fully aware of them or did not know their property was in the district. The rules can be found in Chapter 6105 of Minnesota Administrative Rules.

The Riverway District extends all the way to the bluff and in Afton that can be quite a ways from the river. If you are in the district and have questions, or are not sure if you are, please contact the city. Generally, vegetative cutting is prohibited without a permit, and there are strict guidelines on when a permit can be issued. For a permit to be issued "the essential character, quality, and density of existing growths is preserved and continuous canopy cover is maintained." Additionally, no cutting of vegetation that is providing screening for a structure is allowed. Structures should be "visually inconspicuous in summer months as viewed from the river." Grading and other earth work near the ordinary high water mark also requires a permit, and again, there are strict guidelines on when a permit can be issued. A link to the "Landowner's Guide to the Lower St. Croix Riverway" is available on the city's webpage.

In cases where there has been cutting or other types of work not permitted in the district, restorative action will need to be taken.

In other news, I was saddened to learn that the Hastings Star Gazette and the Bulletin of Woodbury and Cottage Grove will cease publication May 6. When I first got involved in city government, we had a reporter at all of our meetings. This is no longer the case and I think it is unfortunate. I understand that the world of journalism is changing, but I hope we all can find ways to support local journalism and newspapers. The Stillwater Gazette, the Pioneer Press, the Star Tribune, as well as digital media outlets like MinnPost, Bring Me The News, and others rely on citizen support. A vibrant free press remains vital to our society.

I hope you are staying safe and healthy, and that soon we will get back to a semblance of normalcy.

-Bill

## Washington County Environmental Update

**Environmental Center:** All services offered at the Environmental Center are suspended until further notice.

**One-Day Collection Events:** The spring events in Hugo, Mahtomedi, Cottage Grove, and Stillwater have been cancelled at this time.

**Food Scraps (Organics) Drop-off:** Food scraps drop-off service is temporarily suspended at the Washington County Environmental Center and Northern Yard Waste site until further notice.

**Northern Yard Waste Site:** The Northern Yard Waste Site is open to the public during normal operating hours for yard waste only. Please stay at least 6 feet away from attendants and other customers while visiting the county yard waste site.

Visit the website <https://www.co.washington.mn.us/1942/One-Day-Collection-Events> for a full list of closures and service changes.

### SAFE STORAGE FOR HAZARDOUS WASTE

Residents are encouraged to safely store their household hazardous waste until service at the Environmental Center or one-day collection events resumes.

- Store out of the reach of children.
- Store in a dry place. Don't let products freeze.
- Store away from heat or food sources.
- Store in original container and make sure the original label is intact.
- Do not mix products together.
- Place clear tape on both the positive (+) and negative (-) terminals of batteries to prevent fires.

## April Meeting Highlights

The April 6, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting was canceled

### April 21, 2020 City Council Meeting

#### The Council:

- Extended the declaration of local emergency.
- Approved the St. Croix Valley Fire Relief Association revised By-laws.
- Approved hiring of seasonal maintenance staff.
- Discussed planning and procedures relating to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Declared the month of May as Pony Pride Month.
- Adopted an ordinance requiring periodic fire/safety inspections of all commercial buildings and authorized staff to work with the Fire Department to develop a Fire Inspection Program for commercial buildings.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

## Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

To ensure the health of our community, we've decided to cancel Belwin public programs and events through May, including the Belwin Bison Festival. But the bison are still coming! Follow us on social media to see video of the bison taking to the land later this spring, and come visit them on the prairie this summer. We will add events after May, as we are able. Check the website and social media for updates.

**Belwin Conservancy**  
**1553 Stagecoach Trail South**  
**Afton MN 55001**  
**651-436-5189**  
[www.belwin.org](http://www.belwin.org)

## Free Meals & Food Shelf Items

The Eastern Twin Cities Islamic Center (ETCIC) will be providing FREE curbside Meal and Food shelf items on Wednesday's from 5:30 - 6:30 PM. This will be in partnership with Loaves and Fishes.

Based on the demand, there may be an increase the number of days and/or timing. This service will be provided entirely outside of the facility in a safe manner based on social distancing guidelines.

Details on this program are at <https://www.facebook.com/etcic>. The FREE service is open to all - irrespective of faith and religious beliefs. <http://www.etcic.org>

## METAL & TIRE RECYCLING DAY - CANCELED

The city Metal and Tire Recycling Day scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2020 has been CANCELED.

## Washington County Homemade Face Masks Project

Washington County is working with community partners to coordinate the creation and donation of homemade masks to help protect healthcare professionals and those in long-term care.

How it Works: Washington County is facilitating the pick-up and drop-off of supplies, kits, and finished masks. To volunteer, fill out one of the online forms found on the Washington County website <https://www.co.washington.mn.us/Covid19DonationInformation>. Someone will contact you to arrange a pickup. Supplies may be picked up and dropped off at:

- Forest Lake Service Center, 19955 Forest Road. N., Forest Lake;
- Cottage Grove Service Center, 13000 Ravine Parkway S., Cottage Grove; or
- Washington County Government Center, 14949 62nd St. N., Stillwater.

Washington County buildings are currently closed to the public, but white trailers will be at the front of each buildings to accept donations. Volunteers are asked to complete their tasks within 48 hours of picking up supplies so the masks may quickly be provided to those who need them most.

There are several ways to help.

#### Be a donator. Donate:

- 100% cotton fabric – Cotton is not a good host for viruses and can be sanitized effectively. Donated fabric might include quilting fabric, 100% cotton sheets, etc. Tight weave is most effective.
- Pipe cleaners – These are sewn into the top of the mask to provide a tight-fitting seal across the nose.
- Elastic – 1/4", 1/8", thin round.
- New Brown Paper Lunch Bags - All kits will be packaged and distributed in paper lunch bags.

#### Be a Kit Maker:

- Wash and cut fabric
- Assemble donated items into kits, which will be distributed to our Sewing Bees.

#### Be a Sewing Bee:

- Use the tried-and-true mask pattern found on the website, consistent with Centers for Disease Control guidelines.
- Sewers will need a sewing machine, scissors, a ruler, and thread.

Washington County residents and organizations may also request free cloth face masks through the webpage. Donated masks will be distributed based on availability and need. Healthcare and long-term care facilities will be given first priority.

A homemade mask or cloth face covering can prevent your germs from infecting others. Wearing a mask does not protect you from others who may spread the virus and is not a substitute for social distancing.

For assistance, call 651-430-6990 or email [HomemadeMasks@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:HomemadeMasks@co.washington.mn.us)



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



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**Valley Library May 2020**

All Washington County Library branches are closed. Learn more at [WashCoLib.org/COVID19](http://WashCoLib.org/COVID19).

Visit the website, [WashCoLib.org](http://WashCoLib.org), for the latest library information.

[www.washcolib.org](http://www.washcolib.org)  
Valley Branch Library, 384 St. Croix Trail  
South, Lakeland, MN 55043  
651-436-5882

**PATRON  
AFTON, MN 55001**

City of Afton  
Find us on Facebook!



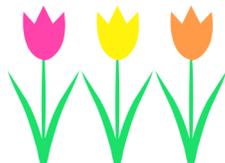
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**IN COLOR**  
on the city website.



*Please recycle this  
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**DNR Completes Afton State Park Parking Lot  
off 50<sup>th</sup> Street - No Parking on 50<sup>th</sup> Street**

To address safety issues in the area of the 50th Street pedestrian entrance to Afton State Park, the DNR has constructed a new parking area as part of a second official entrance to the park. In working with the DNR regarding these vehicle and pedestrian safety concerns, the City agreed to install "No Parking" signs on both sides of 50<sup>th</sup> Street in the area of the park. The signs were installed in late April. The pedestrian access to the park remains open. Like the main state park entrance, all vehicles must display a valid state park sticker to utilize the new parking area off of 50th Street.



**Aggregate Industries Brush  
Days Schedule 2020**

**Saturdays**

**8:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.**

**(Gate locked at 11:00 a.m.)**

**DUE TO THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS (COVID 19) THE APRIL 25TH BRUSH DAY AT THE LAKELAND PLANT HAS BEEN CANCELLED. PLEASE STAND BY AS THINGS MOVE FORWARD.**

**April 25**

May 16	August 15
June 20	September 19
July 18	October 17

**NO construction lumber**

**BRUSH ONLY!**

Please stay in your vehicle while on-site, except for in the dump area to facilitate removal of brush from your vehicle or trailer.

*Located off St. Croix Trail, north of I-94 across from  
the Bungalow*