



**September 2020**

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

### 30th Street Improvement Project

The 30<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement Project is planned to begin on **Monday, August 24**, and is scheduled to be completed over the next 4 weeks. The Project Area is from the large culvert just east of Neal Avenue to a point just west of Nybeck Avenue. The Project has two phases. The first phase is the replacement of culverts. The second phase is the reclamation of the road. The City's contractors are Tri County Services for the replacement of culverts and Executive Paving for the road reclamation. During the replacement of the large culvert 30<sup>th</sup> Street will be closed.

#### Project Schedule Updates

Construction will begin just east of Neal Avenue for the replacement of the large culvert starting on August 24<sup>th</sup> and the road will be closed during that operation. More specific schedule updates will be distributed weekly through the project update email list. These updates will include information about work completed each week and work anticipated for the following week, as well as updates on weather and other unforeseen circumstances. If you would like to be included on the project update email list, please provide an email address to Klay Eckles, Project Manager at [keckles@wsbeng.com](mailto:keckles@wsbeng.com) or Stan Ross at [ward3@ci.afton.mn.us](mailto:ward3@ci.afton.mn.us).

### DNR Bans Deer Feeding in Washington County

Following the discovery of chronic wasting disease in a wild deer in Dakota County in March, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will expand current deer feeding and attractant bans to include Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Rice, Scott and Washington counties effective July 1, 2020.

"To prevent the spread of chronic wasting disease, it's important to limit close contact among deer," said Michelle Carstensen, DNR's wildlife health program supervisor. "By keeping feed and attractants out of our backyards, Minnesotans can discourage the congregation of deer that spreads this deadly disease."

In counties where deer feeding is banned, people need to remove any grains, fruits, nuts and other food placed in ways that could entice deer. People who feed birds or small mammals need to make sure that deer cannot access the food. The feed should be kept at least 6 feet above ground level. Normal agricultural, forest management or wildlife food-planting practices are allowed.

In areas where the attractant ban is also in place, people must remove any liquid food scents, salt, minerals and other natural or manufactured products that attract deer.

More information can be found at: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwd/feedban.html>

### COVID-19 City Meeting Process Changes

The City Council and Planning Commission meetings are being held regularly to carry out the business of the City, but are being held virtually. Virtual Council meetings means that rather than Council members, staff and the public meeting in the Council Chambers, each of these groups participate online via the Zoom application or by phone. 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 meetings will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.

### CITY MEETINGS

**September 7, Labor Day  
Holiday**

The regular meetings of the Planning Commission and City Council are being held remotely. Other Volunteer Commissions and Committees are canceled for September unless otherwise noted below. Remote meetings of those committees may be held if timely action is needed and if properly noticed.

**August 31, 2020**

September Planning Commission Meeting (held in Aug. due to Labor Day Holiday)  
7:00 P.M.

**(To be held remotely)**

**September 15, 2020**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**(To be held remotely)**

Please see the adjacent article regarding COVID-19 City 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 612-720-6478  
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

After several months of heavier topics I thought it would be good to focus on some good news this month.

### COMMUNITY SOLAR GARDEN

The solar garden being built on MnDOT land off Hudson Road will go online in early September. When that happens, 100% of the electricity used by the city will be off-set by renewable energy. This includes all our buildings, street lights, pumps and lift stations for storm water treatment and flood control, as well as the entire wastewater treatment facility. We have addressed water quality issues over the last few years, as well as taken steps to improve our overall energy efficiency. To have those improvements now powered by renewable energy is a real home run. And better still, the city will save thousands of dollars in utility costs every year. Our commitment to the environment has always been strong in Afton, and this is another great step forward.

### NEW OPEN SPACE

Afton will have a new natural preservation area with hiking trails in 2022. In a joint venture between the city, Washington County, Belwin, and with additional funding from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, 31 acres along Valley Creek will be permanently protected. County funding came from the Land and Water Legacy program, and city funding came from the dedicated park fund, which is paid by developers and restricted to open space and park purposes. In addition to their financial contribution, Belwin will manage the natural resources and trails. The land is adjacent to city-owned land to the north and to Belwin land to the south. Trails will be installed that will traverse this property, the city property, and the existing Belwin land. This was a great opportunity, but there was limited time to meet the grant deadlines. Many people worked hard over a very short period of time to pull it off. Thank you to the property owner, our partners at the county, Belwin, and the state. We are lucky to have such dedicated people in our community whose time and talent made this a reality.

### ELECTIONS

In a last bit of good news, I am happy to report that primary day went very smoothly and safely. Our city clerk Julie Yoho and all our election judges did a fantastic job. Julie's work resulted in the best environment we could have hoped for in terms of keeping residents and poll workers safe. I am completely confident in our ability to have an efficient election this November, while also protecting the health of all participants. That being said, I also encourage anyone who is at higher health risk to vote early, either in person or with an absentee ballot by mail. If you prefer to drop your ballot off, Washington County has many sites around the county where you can do that. Full information on early voting is in this newsletter and on our website.

-Bill

## August Meeting Highlights

### August 3, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting

#### **The Commission:**

- Discussed an ordinance amendment regarding the discharge of firearms and public nuisance noises and provided recommendations to the City Council.

### August 18, 2020 City Council Meeting

#### **The Council:**

- Extended the declaration of local emergency.
- Discussed an ordinance amendment regarding the discharge of firearms and public nuisance noises.
- Approved WSB Engineering services to oversee the 30th Street Improvement Project.
- Received an update on Afton Creek Preserve construction.
- Reconsidered the request regarding dangerous dog declaration.
- Approved an extension for Ordinance 02-2020 placing a temporary moratorium on permit applications for non-residential and non-agricultural principal structures.
- Discussed ordinance violations at the property at 12631 on 15th Street.

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

## General Election November 3, 2020

**VOTE Absentee** Citizens are encouraged to vote ahead for the General elections via absentee ballot if they so choose. Absentee voting will reduce the number of voters at the polling place and limit health risks during the pandemic.

**Absentee by Mail** Statewide General absentee voting begins September 18 and ballots will be available in person or mailed beginning that day. To have a ballot mailed to you, contact Washington County Elections, 651-430-6175 or online at the Minnesota Secretary of State website [www.mnvotes.org](http://www.mnvotes.org).

**Ballot Drop Off:**

You may drop off a total of three ballots for other voters. When dropping off other people's ballots, you must show a photo ID and sign a log.

- September 18 - November 2: Ballots can be dropped off at any of the five locations listed in "Absentee In-Person"
- On Election Day, November 3, voted absentee ballots can be dropped off at the Washington County Gov't Center before 3PM.
- Ballots left in any drop boxes located outside county offices will **not** be accepted.
- Absentee ballots cannot be dropped off at polling places on Election Day.

**Absentee In-person** In person absentee voting will begin September 18 and run through November 2 at the below locations:

- Monday - Friday, 8AM - 4:30PM
- Saturday, Oct 31, 8AM - 3PM
- Monday, Nov 2, 8AM - 5PM

- Cottage Grove Service Center, 13000 Ravine Pkwy, Cottage Grove
- Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Ave N, Oakdale
- Headwaters Service Center, 19955 Forest Rd N, Forest Lake
- Washington County Gov't Center, 14949 62nd St N, Stillwater
- Woodbury Central Park/RH Stafford Library, Lower Level, 8595 Central Park Place, Woodbury, MN

**Absentee Voting Reminders:**

- Voters are encouraged to submit absentee ballot applications early.
- The earliest a ballot will be mailed to you is 46 days prior to Election Day.
- Allow enough time to complete the application, have your ballot mailed to you, vote your ballot, and return it to Washington County via mail so it is postmarked by Election Day and received no later than seven days after the election.
- You cannot drop off your voted ballot at your precinct on Election Day.

**VOTE In Person** November 3, 2020. Afton's polling place will be set up to comply with COVID-19 safety guidelines. Social distancing will be in force which may limit the number of voters indoors at a given time. Election judges will wear masks. Voters must wear a mask, and a supply will be available at the door, as well as hand sanitizer. Each voter will be provided a pen to use for marking their ballot and to then take with them. Polling pads will expedite the registration and sign-in process, and Plexiglas barriers will be in place.

**The polling location for Afton residents is Shepherd of the Valley, 14107 Hudson Rd S. Polling hours are 7 am to 8 pm., November 3, 2020.**

**VOTER Registration** To check your voter registration status or register to vote, visit the MN Secretary of State's Voter Information Portal at: [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us) or contact Washington County Elections at 651-430-6175. Voters also may register on election day at the polling location.

## Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

**Education Center Summer Saturdays run through September 5**  
*Every Saturday this summer, Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, the Education Center trails are free and open to everyone for walking!*

Explore Belwin Education Center's miles of rolling woodlands, prairie and wetlands trails every Saturday through Labor Day weekend.  
Rules:

No dogs or bicycles allowed.  
Please respect our neighbors' lands by staying on Belwin Conservancy trails and staying within our boundaries. Thank you.

**Please note: The Education Center building will not be open. There is no restroom access on the site.**

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

### Candidates for Afton City Office

City Council Ward 1 — 4 year term

Robert Q. Dickie  
Annie Perkins

City Council Ward 4 — 4 year term

Randy P. Nelson

Mayor — 2 year term

Bill Palmquist





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



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## Valley Library September 2020

### Washington County Library Online Events for September

Washington County Library is currently offering a variety of online programs for residents to enjoy at home! Registration is required so that participants receive the link to join virtually.

In addition to featured events, most book clubs have transitioned to virtual or outdoor meetings. Storytimes in September will premiere on our Facebook page every Tuesday and Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.

For a full list of events, visit [WashCoLib.org/Events](http://WashCoLib.org/Events).

**Valley Library is open with limited capacity and modified hours.** Visitors can come to pick up holds, browse materials, and use computers without an appointment. Our meeting rooms will remain closed.

When visiting Valley Library, please help protect everyone in the library by:

- Wearing a mask in the building.
- Practicing social distancing from other visitors and staff.
- Keeping your library visit to one hour or less.

### Valley Branch Library

384 St Croix Trail S  
Lakeland, MN 55043  
651-436-5882

[www.washcolib.org](http://www.washcolib.org)

Open with limited capacity. Current hours:  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday:  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Tuesday, Thursday: 12 to 7 p.m.

City of Afton  
Find us on Facebook!



**PATRON  
AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter  
**IN COLOR**  
on the city website.



*Please recycle this  
newsletter after use.*

## Firearms Ordinance Amendment Update

### Firearms Ordinance Amendment Update Addressing Concerns Regarding the Repetitive Discharge of Firearms

The Council has been working since early 2019 to address serious safety and noise concerns regarding the loud, repetitive discharge of firearms that occurs as residents use their property in a manner similar to a shooting range, whereby they discharge a high number of rounds per day on multiple days per week. The amount of this type of shooting by residents has increased significantly, as have the number of complaints.

The Council developed a draft ordinance amendment to address noise and safety concerns related to the current ability to discharge firearms with no or limited restrictions on the number of rounds, the duration and frequency of shooting or the noise generated by the firearms discharge.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing to receive public input regarding the draft ordinance amendment and provided recommendations regarding revisions to the draft ordinance.

The Council discussed the Planning Commission's recommendations, as well as input received from residents regarding the discharge of firearms, and approved the following revised ordinance amendment language to be the subject of a public hearing to be held by the Planning Commission on August 31.

**(k) Other than for allowed hunting, the discharge of firearms on a parcel or contiguous parcels under common ownership is limited to a maximum of one day every two weeks, a maximum of 50 rounds per day and a maximum of 1 hour per day.**