



March 2025

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

City of Afton Dashboard
A Summary of Current Happenings

- ◆ The city will be holding a public information meeting with staff from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Department of Health regarding PFAS contamination in the east metro area groundwater. Please see the Notes from the Mayor in this Newsletter for more information.
- ◆ Washington County is leading a long term planning process for a new regional trail that would provide a connection between the Battle Creek Regional Park in Maplewood and the St. Croix River in Afton. The planning process, which is expected to take about a year, will provide numerous opportunities for public input. Please see the Notes from the Mayor for public input opportunities.
- ◆ The city is beginning a long term planning process for greenway corridors in Afton to enable natural resource preservation, trails, and wildlife protection. The process is planned to include members of the city’s Parks Committee, Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee and Planning Commission, as well as City Council members. The planning process will also include public outreach efforts, including opportunities for public input.

CITY MEETINGS

March 3, 2025

Planning Commission
7:00 PM
CANCELED

March 4, 2025

Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee
5:00 PM

March 10, 2025

Parks Committee
6:00 PM

March 12, 2025

Heritage Preservation Committee
6:00 PM

March 18, 2025

City Council Meeting
7:00 PM

Public Participation Via Zoom Will Continue to be Available for City Council and Planning Commission Meetings.

Information on how to join the meetings will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.

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

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

Afton Museum Event

3165 St. Croix Trail S, Afton, MN 55001



Diane Jarvi, Musician and Poet Brings together the musical & literary traditions of Finland; ancient, regional & immigration songs, music of the Finnish national instrument - the kantele, her own poetry and poems from Finland's epic folk poetic work - The Kalevala.

Thursday, May 15, 2025

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Light refreshments and beverages served
Wine donated by Swirl Wine of Afton

Free event, Museum donations appreciated

RSVP by May 12: 651-346-9494

or linda@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com

Notes from the Mayor

In late April or early May, the city will be holding an open house/town hall with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Department of Health to discuss the ongoing issue of PFAS contamination in the east metro area groundwater. Since we first started meeting with these agencies many years ago, the issues we are dealing with have changed. The initial groundwater modeling seemed to show that the PFAS plume would not reach beyond the northern third of Afton, but we are seeing some wells with positive tests where we had hoped we would not. Also the levels of PFAS in drinking water which are deemed potentially harmful have been substantially decreased since the last meeting we held. Due to these changes, we felt it was a good time to get the state agencies in charge of dealing with this issue back out to Afton to get all of our questions answered. The town hall will be held at Memorial Lutheran Church. The details on the time and date will be provided in the April newsletter.

If your well tests positive the good news is a whole-house water filtration and treatment system that removes PFAS from your well water will be installed in your home, and the cost is covered under the 3M settlement and also the consent decree that was in place prior to that settlement. As a city we continue to advocate for our community, and others who are on private wells, to ensure funding remains for our residents.

A new regional trail is being planned and Washington County is leading the process to gather public input. The trail will run from Battle Creek Regional Park to the St. Croix River. The county will hold the first open house April 21 from 4:00-6:00 PM at Woodbury City Hall. If you are unable to make that, the county is soliciting feedback online from the public now. Please go to their website <https://www.washingtoncountymn.gov/2805/Plans-and-Studies> and on the left side you will see a link to the page with information about this trail. The survey is located on that page.

At the February meeting the council reappointed Kuchen Hale to another term on the planning commission. Thank you Kuchen for agreeing to stay on and for the important work you and the rest of the commission do for the city!

-Bill

Don't forget Daylight

Savings!

*"Spring forward" one hour
on March 9th*



⇒ The Natural Resources & Groundwater Committee will be offering well water testing for nitrates and coliform for Afton residents this summer. Details will be provided in upcoming newsletters.



Meeting Highlights

February 3, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a variance for a garage at 3322 Pennington Ave S.
- Held a public hearing for a variance for a garage at 15416 Afton Hills Dr S.
- Discussed the Draft Amendment to the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.

February 18, 2025 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Approved a variance for a garage at 3322 Pennington Ave S
- Approved a variance for a garage at 15416 Afton Hills Dr S.
- Discussed the Draft Amendment to the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.
- Reappointed Kuchen Hale to another three year term on the Planning Commission.
- Discussed the Parks Committee recommendations regarding Town Square Park basketball court improvements.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:
www.ci.afton.mn.us

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Women Walking

Saturday, March 15

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Belwin Hilltop Classroom

Cost: Sliding Scale: \$20, \$35, or \$50

Come celebrate the seasonal changes in the natural world! Vernal Equinox, Summer Solstice, Autumnal Equinox, Winter Solstice, each brings us to a new season, a new place in our annual trip around the sun. We will gather together indoors to share some refreshments and some easy centering exercises. We will then move out to the woods and prairies for walking meditations and experiences in the natural world. We will end our time together with light refreshments around the fire.

Frog Walk

April 22, 2025

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Belwin Main Office

Cost: Sliding Scale of \$10, \$18 or \$25 / Person

Enjoy an evening stroll around Belwin's Bulrush Slough while listening for the spring calls of our native frogs. (Spring Peepers, Wood Frogs, Chorus Frogs). We will gather for a brief introduction and then head out to a paved trail to listen and look for signs of spring. The total length of the walk is about 1 mile. We will be walking at a moderate pace with several stops along the way. This program is appropriate for anyone 8 years and older. Please dress for the weather. This program will go rain or shine. This event is designed for one child and one adult.

For details and registration contact:

Belwin Conservancy
1553 Stagecoach Trail South
Afton MN 55001
651-436-5189
www.belwin.org

Test Your Home for Radon

Radon is a colorless and odorless gas that comes from the soil. The gas can accumulate in the home and become a health risk. Exposure to radon over a long period of time can lead to lung damage or cancer. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause in smokers.

In Minnesota, 2 in 5 homes have radon levels that pose a significant health risk. A radon test is the only way to know how much radon is in your home. Short term radon test kits are available to Washington County residents at no cost.

Radon test kits can be picked up from the following Washington County locations during operating hours:

Cottage Grove Service Center - 13000 Ravine Parkway South Cottage Grove — Department of Public Health & Environment

Forest Lake Service Center - 19955 Forest Road North, Forest Lake—Department of Public Health & Environment

North Environmental Center - 6065 Headwaters Parkway, Forest Lake—Front desk or drive lane

South Environmental Center - 4039 Cottage Grove Drive Woodbury—Front desk or drive lane

Stillwater Government Center - 14949 62nd Street North Stillwater —Department of Public Health & Environment, Room 4600

Getting Ready for Spring: Rinta Community Garden

Spring will be here soon; time for gardeners to get their hands dirty. The Rinta Community Garden has 25 plots available to residents of the Lower St. Croix Valley.

There is no charge for using a plot. Gardeners are asked not to use pesticides and to use organic fertilizers. There is no well water at the site, but 2 rain barrels collecting runoff from a small shed will hold 250 gallons of water for irrigation when necessary. The installation of a high fence has thwarted hungry deer.

If you are interested in a garden plot at Rinta, contact Afton City Hall or go to the Afton website for an application (Located under "Community—Parks, Park Reservations & Special Events"). Complete and return it to Afton City Hall, 3033 St. Croix Trail, P.O. Box 219, Afton, MN 55001.

Application deadline is April 1, 2025

If you have additional questions, contact Barbara Ronningen at bjronningen@yahoo.com.



CITY OF AFTON
3033 ST CROIX TRAIL SO
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AFTON, MN 55001

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Valley Library Events & Important Dates

Did you know that the Extended Access program at Valley Library has exited the Pilot stage and is now fully accessible to all active Washington County Library card holders? This program gives registered Washington County Library card holders access to the Valley Library space 7 days a week from 6:00am-10:00pm, including holidays.

For Adults:

The Valley Library Book Club meets **5:00-6:00pm** on the 4th Thursday of every month. The title selection for the **Thursday March 27th** meeting is "Vanished in Vermillion: The Real Story of South Dakota's Most Infamous Cold Case" by Lou Raguse.

Saturday, March 22nd 10:30am-12:00
Painting Mountains and Forests with Bamboo Brushes at Valley Library.

For Teens:

Life Skills for Young Adults series at the RH Stafford Library in *Woodbury*. Presented by UMN 4-H Extension - Life Skills: Taxes will be presented on **Thursday March 6 5:30-7:00pm** where youth, ages 14-18, will learn about taxes. Registration is required.

Teens in Grades 6-8 who are interested in babysitting can sign up for a free 2 day **SafeSitter babysitting safety** course at the RH Stafford Library in *Woodbury* run in partnership with the YMCA on **March 8 and March 15**. Registration closes on **Wednesday March 5**

For Kids:

Every Monday 10:30-11:00 am Storytime
Monday, March 17th 10:30-11:00 Music and Movement Storytime

Thursday, March 13th 6:00 pm
Pajama storytime

Saturday, March 15 11:00-1:00 Kid Builders

Tuesday, March 25th 3:00-4:30 Let's Paint Pokemon Registration required. Ages 5-12

Wednesday, March 26th 1:00 Animals Nobody Loves presented by the Wildlife Science Center.

Monday, March 24th 1:00-2:30 Kid Builders Ages 5+

Thursday, March 27th 2:00-3:00 Glitter Slime Ages 5+

Monday, March 31st 1:00-2:00 Art Extravaganza All ages

For complete information and to register for programs contact:

Valley Library 651-436-5882
www.washcolib.org

PATRON AFTON, MN 55001

Online payments are now available for city permits & fees including Building Permits and Sewer Payments,
www.ci.afton.mn.us



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Tree Steward Program



Minnesota Tree Care Advocate Program



Become a Washington County Tree Steward Volunteer!

Join the Washington Conservation District and UMN to learn more about trees and how to help care for our collective urban forest!

The Minnesota Tree Steward program is designed for people who love trees, enjoy being outdoors, and want to volunteer with their community. Through a partnership with the Washington Conservation District (WCD) and University of Minnesota, you'll learn how to care for young and newly planted trees in public spaces of Washington County. After completing the training and short assessment, you'll also become a certified Tree Steward Volunteer who can participate in activities under the guidance of WCD/host site Forestry staff.

To stay active, volunteers are encouraged to complete 25 hours of volunteer work and/or participate in 3 tree related volunteer events each year. Questions? : Jessica Sahu Teli jSahu.Teli@mnwcd.org

Workshop dates (Pick one):

April 5th : 9am - 2pm : Scandia Community Center

April 12th : 9am - 2pm: Nordic Center in Lake Elmo Park Reserve

