



April 2023

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

City of Afton

**City of Afton Dashboard
A Summary of Current Happenings**

- ◆ The City’s Natural Resources and Ground Water Committee (NRGC) will again be collecting well water samples for water testing on June 20th and June 27th from 7:00 - 9:00 am at City Hall. Full details will be included in the May and June newsletters.
- ◆ The latest flood prediction levels indicate an 80% chance that the river will reach 689 feet elevation (above mean sea level). As a reference, the major flood of 1965 reached 694.1. This is the highest level ever recorded. In 1965 the levee had not been installed and the water level in the Old Village reached almost to the top of Selma’s roof line. The 2001 flood reached a level of 692.3. Due to the Old Village improvements in 2017 the upgraded levee is now at an elevation of 695 and a system of drainpipes carries water that collects on the land side of the levee to an automated pumping system that has a back-up generator.
- ◆ The Council approved an ordinance amendment providing performance standards for dwelling units in commercial buildings in the Old Village, including allowing two dwelling units in a commercial building.
- ◆ Seasonal road weight restrictions are now in place. The weight restrictions are expected to remain in place for 4 to 6 weeks. The City streets have a 5 ton weight limit.
- ◆ In addition to the speed enforcement provided by the Washington County Deputies as part of their regular patrol duties, additional speed patrols will start on Memorial Day weekend. The City’s speed trailer will also be deployed again this year. Please be kind to neighbors and slow down in Afton.

SAR

METAL & TIRE RECYCLING DAY

Metal and Tire Recycling Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 13, 2023 at the City Garage, 1675 Stagecoach Trail. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Residents must unload their own vehicles— come prepared to unload.

- SCRAP METAL includes swing sets, bicycles, metal toys, etc. (**NO** appliances are allowed.) All fabric, rubber, wood, fluids, and anything else that is *not* metal must be removed.
- TIRES must be off the rims (metal rims can be recycled). Tire size is limited to your ability to lift them. **NO** large tires such as tractor tires. This is for personal disposal only. No commercial supplies of tires.

PLEASE BE AWARE: A MAXIMUM OF 4 TIRES PER HOUSEHOLD WILL BE ACCEPTED.
EXCEPTIONS TO THIS MAY BE CONSIDERED BUT RESIDENTS MUST CONTACT CITY HALL PRIOR TO THE EVENT IF THEY ARE REQUESTING TO BRING MORE THAN 4 TIRES.

Please be patient and cooperate with staff by following their direction in lining up and unloading your metal items and tires.

CITY MEETINGS

April 3, 2023

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 PM

April 4, 2023

Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee 5:00 PM

April 18, 2023

City Council Meeting
7:00 PM

April 26, 2023

Parks Committee Meeting
6:00 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

Notes from the Mayor

The property valuation notices from the County Assessor's Office were mailed the third week of March. The mailer property owners received contains the tax statements for taxes due in 2023, as well as the current property value determined on the assessment date of January 2 of this year. The property tax system in Minnesota is complicated and therefore can be confusing. It is a multiple year process that involves an assessment year followed by a taxes payable year. For instance, the taxes contained in the 2023 tax statements are set based on the property values determined in 2022 and the budgets passed in December of 2022 by the various taxing authorities. During the assessment year, the values set on January 2 can be appealed in the spring. Once those values are finalized, the values and the new budgets in December are what will determine our share of the taxes we pay the following year.

The valuation notice includes information on the steps to take if you feel the property value is incorrect. In Afton, we use an Open Book process for appeals, meaning the City does not hold a separate Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting. Rather, residents can attend any of the Open Book meetings listed on the valuation notice that are held by the County, as well as call into the County Assessor's Office with questions related to their property. The contact information for the assessor is on the notice. An advantage of the Open Book process is it provides greater flexibility for a property owner as there are multiple meetings and times available to make an appeal. If you do plan to appeal, I would recommend calling the number on the notice. Calling ahead allows the assessor to have your information ready to discuss.

In other news, the most recent flood forecast for the St. Croix River is something we are monitoring. These projections tend to change as we move through the spring, but this forecast is one of the more concerning ones I have seen. However, we are fortunate that we have the infrastructure in place to handle high water, and we have a plan in place if the worst forecast happens. Let's all hope for a gradual melt in the watershed north of here, and not much rain! Luckily, we no longer have the need for sandbagging or the associated costs we used to incur when a forecast like this was issued. Some of our neighbors are already working on those flood preparations. Currently there is a 70% chance of reaching major flood stage, but our infrastructure can handle that. However, even with our certified levee, we need to be diligent and prepared if the River rises to the historic levels this forecast gives a 10% chance of hitting. If that were to occur, the City has a contingency plan in place to ensure our levee and flood protections can handle the situation. If you use social media, consider following the City on Facebook and visit our website (<https://www.ci.afton.mn.us>) as we will post updates as we get them.

Finally, at our March meeting we appointed Kate Thomas to the Heritage Preservation Commission. Kate brings a great deal of experience to the Commission and we are thrilled she volunteered to serve. Thank you, Kate!

-Bill

The Afton Museum
invites you to a presentation
& book signing by
Afton Wildlife & Landscape
Photographer Bill Palmquist

Thursday April 27, 2023
6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



Bill will share the remarkable bird & wildlife images he captured during his two, year-long explorations of Afton's floodplain forest & upland prairies.

Join us for an evening that may change the way you view our landscape!

RSVP by April 24: 651-436-3500 or vickie@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com

*Wine, beer, water & hors d'oeuvres served.
Museum donations appreciated. Credit card or check for book purchase to author (\$35).
Afton Historical Museum, 3165 St. Croix Trail S, Afton, MN 55001*

Meeting Highlights

March 6, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for an Ordinance Amendment to add Zoning Regulations Regarding Dwelling Units in Commercial Buildings in the VHS-C District.
- Received information from the Belwin Conservancy regarding a Conditional Use Permit pre-application.

March 21, 2023 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Appointed Kate Thomas to serve on the Heritage Preservation Commission.
- Approved an Ordinance Amendment to add Zoning Regulations Regarding Dwelling Units in Commercial Buildings in the VHS-C District.
- Approved a variance application for the replacement of a substandard retaining wall at 4102 River Rd.

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

Interfaith Iftar Invitation

Eastern Twin Cities Islamic Center (ETCIC) would like to invite all Afton residents to our Interfaith Iftar (opening of fast in the month of Ramadan) dinner on **Wed April 5th, 2023** at our Islamic Center located at 12585 Hudson Rd S, Afton. The event will include a tour of our Islamic Center, dinner and an opportunity to meet and enjoy the company of people from different backgrounds, faiths and communities. This event is being hosted in **collaboration** with Minnesota Council of Churches and is **free** and **informal**, but requires registration with the Minnesota Council of Churches at <http://mnchurches.webbrohd.com/what-we-do/taking-heart>

Compost Bin and Rain Barrel Sale

Washington County is excited to partner with the Recycling Association of Minnesota to sell discounted compost bins and rain barrels to Washington County residents. Home Composter compost bins are \$56 and Rain Catcher rain barrels are \$70. Pre-ordered items must be picked-up at the Environmental Center within 90 days of purchase. Order online through Washington County: <https://www.co.washington.mn.us/2813/Compost-Bin-and-Rain-Barrel-Sale>

I-94 Road Construction Public Meeting

You're invited to a public meeting on Tue, April 11 at Woodbury City Hall to learn more about the I-94 Oakdale to Lakeland project work, traffic impacts and construction schedule.

Tuesday, April 11

In-person public meeting

4-6:30 p.m.

Woodbury City Hall
8301 Valley Creek Rd.
Woodbury, MN 55125

About this event

Learn more about the project work, traffic impacts and construction schedule at the public meeting. There will be no formal presentation. The project team will be available to answer questions throughout the meeting.

Project Website:

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i94oakdale-stcroix>

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Frog Walk at Oxbow Trails

Tuesday, April 25

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Oxbow Trails, 2398 St. Croix Trail S, Afton MN 55001

Cost: \$10 per family, RSVP required.

Celebrating Your Wild Voice!

Saturday, April 29, 2023

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S, Afton, MN 55001

Cost: Sliding Scale of \$35, \$50, or \$70
Must be 16 and older.

St. Paul Community Education Frog Walk

Wednesday, May 3

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Wetlands Classroom, 1553 Stagecoach Tr. Afton MN 55001

Cost: \$25, RSVP required.

Frog Walk at Oxbow Trails Trails

Wednesday, May 10

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Oxbow Trails, 2398 St. Croix Trail S, Afton MN 55001

Cost: \$10 per family, RSVP required.

Belwin Bison Festival

Saturday, May 20

9:00 am: 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run

Check-in

10:00 am - 2:00 pm: Festival

Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields, 15601 Hudson Rd. N, Lakeland, MN

Cost: \$10 per car. Separate entrance fee for 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run.

This beloved annual event features the release of the 2023 Northstar Bison herd onto Belwin's Bison Prairie. In addition to the release, visitors can also enjoy live music, eco-arts, and food trucks. Prior to the release, we'll host a 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run so runners can trek through the Prairie before the festival begins.

For details and to register for events contact:

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



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

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Valley Library Events & Important Dates

Closed April 19 for Staff Training

Did you know that Washington County residents can apply for a library card in person, over the phone or through our website? **Did you also know** that Washington County residents can register their library cards with other library systems?

The Valley Library has multiple copies of the 2023 NEA Big Read St. Croix Valley title, "Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?" available for checkout.

For Adults:

The Valley Library Book Club meets 5:00-6:00pm on the 4th Thursday of every month. This book club meets in person in the Valley Library conference room but a Zoom link can be provided for those who wish to join virtually.

Thursday April 13th 5:00-6:00 Needle Felted Succulent

Needle felting is the process of sculpting loose wool with a needle, creating different shapes and forms. Learn this technique and create a no-maintenance plant to decorate your home. *Registration is required.*

For Kids:

Every Monday 10:30-11:00 am Family Story time

Super Storytime on **April 17** 10:30-11:30 – storytime plus a fun craft activity.

Monday, April 10 10:30-11:15 am Petite Concerts: Celebrate Spring

Join us for a fun-filled, musical experience at Valley Library. We will celebrate spring through this experiential event designed for young listeners. From newborns to preschoolers, the concert will be fun and interactive. This special event is presented by Petite Concerts and will include an exploration of instruments.

Thursday, April 20 3:00-6:00 Family Art Cart

Drop by Valley Library between 3 and 6 p.m. for a family craft activity. Crafts are designed for children ages 4 and up and their grownups. The crafts are self-guided and designed to allow children room for expanding upon their own design through creativity and imagination.

Ongoing:

Scavenger Hunt - Every month has a theme. Find 10 images throughout the library and win a sticker.

Valley Branch 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



Please recycle this newsletter after use.

Native Plant Grants

Beautify your yard, provide pollinator habitat & protect water resources with native plantings. Best of all, there are native plant grants of up to \$500.00 available to Washington County Residents!



Request a site visit from the Washington Conservation District at MNWCD.org to get started!

Rinta Community Garden

Several plots are still available at the Rinta Community Garden for the 2023 gardening season. 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 "Parks, Park Reservations & Special Events"). Complete and return it to Afton City Hall.

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