



June 2023

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

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

- ◆ A reminder to residents in the Old Village who have not connected to the Sanitary Sewer system: the deadline is the end of 2024. Considering contractor lead times and the short construction season, scheduling your hook up now is strongly suggested to avoid potential difficulty and higher costs due to higher demand for contractors, as well as additional fees for not connecting before the 2024 deadline.
- ◆ Our contractor continues to clean up debris from damage to trees in the city's right of way. The clean-up will continue through the summer and into the fall.
- ◆ Free water testing signup deadline is June 12th. Call city hall (651-436-5090) to sign up. Testing is limited and is determined on a first-come first-served basis.
- ◆ Road patching should be completed on Oakgreen Avenue south of 15th Street, 50th Street, and a small patch on 45th Street by May 25.
- ◆ The next major road improvements are planned to occur on Valley Creek Trail, on Oakgreen Avenue South, and on Osgood Ave and other shorter roads in 2027 or 2028 based on the level of funding projected to be available.
- ◆ The 2040 Comprehensive Plan with an amendment to allow two dwellings units in commercial buildings in the Old Village was approved.
- ◆ The council directed staff to review changing the speed limit on 30th Street near Trading Post Trail from 45 MPH to 35 MPH.

SAR

June 19, 2023 City Office Closed for the Juneteenth Holiday

CITY MEETINGS

June 5, 2023

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 PM

June 6, 2023

Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee 5:00 PM

June 20, 2023

City Council Meeting
7:00 PM

June 26, 2023

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 PM

June 28, 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



Afton Strawberry Festival

Sat. June 24, 2023 – 10am – 5pm

Sun. June 25, 2023 – 10am – 4pm

Fresh, locally grown strawberries!

Live music Saturday and Sunday

Afton Town Square Park

Visit exploreafton.com for more information

Afton 4th of July Parade

Tuesday, July 4, 2023

Start time 1:00

Food—Drinks—Music—Trolley Rides

Afton Main Street

Find information at: <http://aftonparade.com/>

Notes from the Mayor

The extra sheriff patrols the city contracts for in the summer months to address speeding, noise and safety issues have started. Please be aware of this when you are out on the roads. We have been forced to add extra patrols each of the last several years to address speeding and vehicle noise. This is a problem with no easy solution. But one thing that is clear is that the problem is getting worse. It is not our goal to go out and write a bunch of tickets. Our goal is to get people visiting our community to slow down and enjoy the scenery, and to do so in a way that does not ruin the weekends for everyone who lives here.

If you witness cars, trucks, or motorcycles being operated at excessive speeds, with excessive noise, or in a manner that is unsafe for other vehicles and pedestrians, call 911 (not the non-emergency number). The deputies need to know where this is happening. I know it feels odd to call 911 about something like this, but it is what we have been advised to do. Simply let the operator know what you are calling about and if they have to put you on hold they will.

It is unfortunate that we are in this position, but we are hearing stories repeatedly about cars doing donuts in the middle of busy streets, motorcycles doing wheelies down the same roads, both wildly exceeding the speed limit and being operated in a manner that is so loud residents cannot enjoy a barbecue in their own backyards. We can't allow this to become the new normal. It is a pretty awful feeling to have to have everyone at a graduation party or family gathering stop talking for several minutes until the noise dies down so they can hear each other again. We are working to be a welcoming community, but one that does enforce the law so that all of us can enjoy the summer months. The sooner we can get that message across, the sooner all of us, residents and visitors alike, can truly enjoy the beautiful summer months here and all that Afton has to offer.

In other news, with the end of the legislative session several bills have been passed that should bring some much needed funding to our City. We will get the details out when we have them, but we expect to receive new funding that can be put toward infrastructure as well as public safety. We are very interested to hear how these bills will impact us as this new funding would be the first time we might have some reliable ongoing state aid payments we can use to help our budgets, our tax levy, and the rising costs of road improvements, and public safety.

-Bill



Yellow Ribbon Alliance Lower St Croix Valley

Arch Allies, will headline a fundraiser in September for the Yellow Ribbon Alliance of the Lower St. Croix Valley.

"Field of Bands" will be held noon to 8 p.m. Sept. 16 at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Baytown Township. Also playing: Girls Night Out, Westside and Wayward Boyz Klub

The event will celebrate veterans and service members and honor the memory of Randy Kopesky, who helped found the Yellow Ribbon Alliance of the Lower St. Croix Valley, an organization that raises money to provide support and assistance for active military members along with veterans and their families residing in the Lower St. Croix Valley area. Kopesky, who died in November 2019 when he was hit by a car on the shoulder of Interstate 94, was "the driving force in the creation of the (alliance), and he is missed immensely," said Cindie Reiter, a member of the alliance.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$30 day of show; children 12 and under are free.

Attendees are asked to use the south entrance on 40th Street and to bring their own chairs; limited bleacher and picnic-table seating will be available. There will be free parking, food trucks and a kid's area. Wine and beer will be sold at the event; no coolers will be allowed.

For more information, go to 5cityyellowribbon.com

American Red Cross Blood Drive 6/22/23

St. Francis of Assisi Church partners with American Red Cross to host community blood drive.

Location: 16770 13th St S, Lake St Croix Beach, MN

Date: Thursday, June 22nd from 1:00pm to 7:00pm.

To make an appointment to donate, sign up online at redcrossblood.org. Enter **Afton Lakeland** in the middle of the main screen where it asks for **Zip/Sponsor Code** or in the red box in the upper right where it says **Find a Blood Drive**.

For more information or if you need help, please call Ralph Piscitello, Blood Drive Leader 952-221-3460



**American
Red Cross**

Meeting Highlights

May 1, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a variance application for a front yard setback to allow a front porch at 4524 River Rd S. to restore the home to its original historic look.
- Held a public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit for a short term rental license at 12740 22nd St S.
- Held a public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit at 12511 Hudson Road S for a staging area for the Xcel Energy substation.

May 16, 2023 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Approved a variance application for a front yard setback to allow a front porch at 4524 River Rd S. to restore the home to its original historic look.
- Approved Conditional Use Permit for a short term rental license at 12740 22nd St S. with restrictions to avoid impacts on neighboring properties.
- Approved a Conditional Use Permit at 12511 Hudson Road S for a staging area for the Xcel Energy substation.
- Adopted the 2040 Comprehensive Plan with an amendment to allow two dwelling units in commercial buildings in the VHS-C District.
- Approved a route recommendation for the Middle St Croix Regional Trail.
- Approved an update to the Fee Schedule Ordinance.

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

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Morning Wetland Walk

Saturday, June 3

7:15 am - 9:00 am

Presented in partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools Community Education
 Belwin Conservancy Wetlands Classroom,
 1553 Stagecoach Tr. S., Afton MN 55001
 Cost: \$25

Managing Woodlands for Resiliency

Tuesday, June 6

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Presented in partnership with Washington Conservation District
 Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom, 1553 Stagecoach Tr. S., Afton MN 55001
 Cost: Free

Oxbow Trails Opening Day

Thursday, June 15

Dawn to dusk

Belwin Conservancy Oxbow Trails, 2638 St. Croix Trail S., Afton, MN, 55001
 Cost: Free

Women Walking

Saturday, June 17, 2023

6:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Savanna Center, 795 Indian Trail S., Afton, MN, 55001
 Cost: \$20

Amphibians and Reptiles of Minnesota

Saturday, July 29, 2023

10:00 am - 11:30 am

Presented in partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools Community Education
 Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom, 1553 Stagecoach Tr. S., Afton MN 55001
 Cost: \$25

For details and to register for events contact:

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

2023 FREE Water Testing For Nitrates And Total Coliform Bacteria

The Natural Resource and Groundwater Committee (NRGC) will offer free well testing for nitrates and total coliform bacteria for Afton residents. **June 20 or 27** are the dates available for residents to collect a fresh sample of their water and bring it to City Hall.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

- ⇒ Phone City Hall at 651-436-5090 or email jjyoho@ci.afton.mn.us and provide your name & address. A sampling kit that consists of a bottle, a sample information form, and sampling instructions will be mailed to you.
- ⇒ Collect your sample on either June 20 or 27, and then bring your fresh, full sample bottle to City Hall between 7:00 and 9:30 a.m. that day. Volunteers will deliver the samples to the Department of Public Health and Environment for analysis. Your nitrate and total coliform results will be mailed to you.
- ⇒ Deadline for signing up is June 12. Kits are distributed on a first come, first served basis.
- ⇒ Please do not request a test kit if you are unable to participate on June 20 or 27.

OTHER WAYS TO GET YOUR WATER TESTED:

- The Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment provides well water testing services for a wide range of contaminants to county residents for a modest fee throughout the year. Visit <https://www.co.washington.mn.us/637/Water-Tests> for more information.
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota Department of Health are offering well testing for PFAS for residents within the sampling area (THIS INCLUDES AFTON) Visit the MPCA website for details: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/well-sampling-in-the-east-metro-area>

BWSR ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR LAWNS TO LEGUMES GRANTS

Cost-share funding available to Minnesota residents to create residential pollinator habitat

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is once again accepting applications for grants for the Lawns to Legumes program. This program aims to increase habitat for at-risk pollinators in residential settings across the state by providing people with cost-share funding, workshops, coaching and gardening resources. The new application period is open and applications will be accepted through June 30, 2023.

For more information on Lawns to Legumes, visit BWSR's website: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/l2l>



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

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
AFTON MN 55001
PERMIT NO. 15

Valley Library Events & Important Dates

Closed June 19 for Juneteenth

For Adults:

Thursday June 29th 5:00-6:00 Bizarre History of Minnesota: Strange Stories from Our Past presented by Chad Lewis

For Kids:

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

Super Storytime on June 12 10:30-11:30 – storytime plus a fun craft activity.

Saturday, June 3 1:00-2:00 The Jolly Pops Concert

Thursday, June 8 3:00-6:00 Family Art Cart

Wednesday, June 14 1:00-2:00 Rock Painting

Tuesday, June 20 4:00-6:00 Fused Glass Suncatchers

Saturday, June 24 11:00-12:00 STEM Saturday: Glitter Slime

Monday, June 28 1:00-3:00 Bakken Museum – Science in the Summer

For information and to register for programs contact:

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.

Help Keep our Waterways Clean

Adopt a Storm Drain

Volunteer fifteen minutes, twice a month, for cleaner waterways and healthier communities. Storm drains flow directly to local lakes, rivers, and wetlands, acting as a conduit for trash and organic pollutants. Adopt-a-Drain asks residents to adopt a storm drain in their neighborhood and keep it clear of leaves, trash, and other debris to reduce water pollution.

<https://mn.adopt-a-drain.org/>

Prevent Runoff Pollution—Four Tips for Everyday Pollution Prevention

- Rain and melting snow wash anything that’s on streets and other paved surfaces down storm drains and into lakes, rivers, and wetlands.
- Trash clogs drains and pipes causing flooding. Put it in the garbage.
- Leaves, grass, and dirt contain phosphorus, which feeds the algae that turn lakes green. Keep them off streets and sidewalks.
- Dog poop carries harmful bacteria and phosphorus. Pick up after your pet!
- Salt is harmful to waterways and aquatic life. Just one teaspoon pollutes five gallons of water forever. Sweep up leftover salt and reuse it.

It’s Planting Season, two very important questions to ask your grower

- ⇒ **Does this nursery use or purchase material from a nursery that uses neonicotinoids (Neonics)?**
According to the Natural Resource Defense Council, neonics are a commonly used “systemic” pesticide that the plant soaks up as it grows; making the plant itself including its nectar, pollen, leaves, stems, and fruit toxic. Only a small portion of the neonics make it into the target plant, leaving about 95 percent in the soil. Once in the soil, neonics remain active for years and translocate into surrounding soil, plants, and water. In addition to killing off the pest species, neonics impact bees, butterflies, birds, and other pollinators. Recent studies have also linked neonics to collapse of fisheries and birth defects in white-tailed deer. Visit <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/neonicotinoids-101-effects-humans-and-bees> for more information.
- ⇒ **Where do you source your soil and mulch, and what do you do to prevent the spread of the “invasive jumping” worm?**
Jumping worms were first discovered in MN in 2006, the invasive jumping worm can strip the soil of nutrients, kill plants and cause severe erosion. As an informed gardener, you should inspect soil and mulch for jumping worms, and inspect plants before putting them in the ground. If either appear to have a loose consistency like that of coffee grounds or cat litter, which could mean jumping worms have eaten through it. Visit <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialanimals/jumping-worm/index.html> for more information.