



City of Afton

January 2017

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

Tree Workshop Coming in February!

It's a fresh new year and one of a Minnesotan's favorite things to do in mid-winter is to grab a warm drink, a cozy blanket and sit down with a notepad to start dreaming of summer plants and gardens. If you are looking at any big landscaping changes to your property this coming growing season, especially planting trees, it is indeed time to start planning!

Are you wondering what trees would thrive in your yard? What trees are the most resilient in Minnesota's changing climate? What's the proper method of planting a tree? The Washington Conservation District (WCD) is already preparing for the annual Tree Sale and we are ready to help! On February 23rd, 2017, we will be offering dinner and a short evening workshop to help you find the answers to these questions and more with expert guest presenters from the US Forest Service, the DNR and the WCD.

We hope you can join us! Space is limited so register early!

When: February 23rd, 2017 — 5:30-7:30pm
Where: Washington Conservation District Office
 455 Hayward Ave N, Oakdale, MN 55128
Cost: **FREE**
RSVP: Required for dinner tinyurl.com/2017Trees
 or call Jenn Radtke at 651-330-8220 x44

To order trees: www.mnwcd.org/land/trees/

— The Washington Conservation District (WCD)



CITY MEETINGS

**The City Office is Closed
Monday, January 16**

*In observance of
Martin Luther King, Jr Day*

January 3, 2017

Natural Resources & Groundwater
5:00 P.M.

January 3, 2017

Parks Committee
7:00 P.M.

January 9, 2017

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 P.M.

January 11, 2017

Heritage Preservation Commission
5:00 P.M.

January 17, 2017

City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

*All meetings are held at City Hall
unless otherwise noted.*

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor:	Richard Bend	436-7684
Ward 1:	Bill Palmquist	308-0569
Ward 2:	Joe Richter	436-1819
Ward 3:	Stan Ross	436-1346
Ward 4:	Randy Nelson	436-2479

CITY HALL

Monday — Friday

9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

651 - 436 - 5090

CITY WEBSITE

www.ci.afton.mn.us

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Animal Control	715-386-7789
Building Inspector	436-6469
Burning Permits	248-5103
Environmental Center	430-6655
Highland Sanitation	458-0043
Hillcrest Animal Hosp	484-7211
LSCV Fire Dept	436-7033
Sheriff's Office	439-9381

EMERGENCY 911

Notes from the Mayor

by Richard Bend

Celebrating and Anticipating Success — — Through Community Participation

The past year has been a very successful one thanks to outstanding and active participation in a broad range of community activities by many residents and business owners, including members of the City's volunteer commissions and committees. It has also been a pleasure to work with an excellent group of City Council members who are able to effectively work through difficult issues together and who share the same broad vision for the community. I am confident that with continued participation by the community's outstanding individuals and groups, the coming year will be even more successful.

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

The Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department expresses its sincerest THANKS to our community neighbors who attended and/or supported our annual Breakfast with Santa fundraising drive this past December. It was a record turnout for our December breakfasts and just as important, we were able to donate over 430 pounds of nonperishable items to the local food shelf. **Your support is recognized and so very appreciated!**

Long-Time City Office Staff says Goodbye

Kim Swanson Linner, who joined the City of Afton staff in May 2010 as Deputy Clerk has resigned her current position as City Clerk. She is relocating to Flagstaff, Arizona to continue her public service and to pursue other interests.

Her resignation letter detailed that she felt extremely blessed to have had the opportunity to provide exemplary service to the residents of Afton for the past seven years and cherished making the acquaintance of the many residents, committee and commission members and enjoyed working with various city staff and City Council members and especially the fabulous election judges!

Kim has offered to continue in a consultant capacity via telecommuting for such tasks as preparing City Council and Planning Commission minutes and writing the monthly city newsletter until a replacement has been found.

Afton's High Speed Internet

CenturyLink had turnover in engineering staff this summer causing a delay on the startup date for the High Speed Internet Project. Afton representatives are trying to get a meeting with the CenturyLink project contact on January 17th to get an update on the completion of the high speed internet project. For now, residents continue to report the construction going on in their neighborhood. We have let CenturyLink know that our residents are very anxious to start using the new improved service coming to all of Afton.

— Stan Ross, Afton City Council



Winter is an excellent time to have your trees inspected and pruned.

Our certified arborists can clearly detect structural issues without the obstruction of leaves. For certain areas, frozen ground also allows equipment access which may not be available in warmer weather.

Why prune trees in winter?

- Prevent storm damage
- Remove dead, broken or poorly structured branches
- Provide clearance and air circulation to roofs
- Reduce wind resistance
- Raise tree canopy by removing low limbs
- Enhance views
- Provide walkway and driveway clearance
- Get a jump on spring

Your arborist can set up a pruning schedule that makes sense for your landscape species and budget.

Deer browsing problems? We can help. Ask us about your options.

To arrange a complimentary consultation:

CALL: East Metro: (651) 770-3744
West Metro: (952) 881-3779
WI: (715) 749-3475

EMAIL: Afton@savatree.com

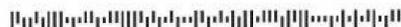
VISIT: savatree.com/consults

We are moving to a new location!

12450 Hudson Road S.
Afton, MN 55001

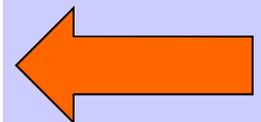
East Metro: (651) 770-3744
West Metro: (952) 881-3779
WI: (715) 749-3475
email: Afton@savatree.com

12450 Hudson Road S.
Afton, MN 55001
savatree.com



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Afton City Code details that the trimming of trees and maintaining the landscape of the road frontage right-of-way is the responsibility of individual land-owners.

Please see **Chapter 10, Environment**, on the City Website for these and other environmental regulations to keep our city beautiful and healthy for all to enjoy!! *Thank you!*

Planning Commission, December 5

- **Council asked the PC to Reconsider** an Ordinance Amendment for Sec. 12-132 (B)(3). Contiguous Parcels Under Common Ownership. Zoning code regulations require two or more contiguous parcels under common ownership to be combined with the adjacent parcels when any individual parcel does not meet the full lot width and area requirements, in order to create a lot that meets the lot width and area requirements.
- **PC Sent** the proposed ordinance amendment for Sec. 12-132 (B)(3) back to City Council to get greater guidance on what the Council is trying to accomplish; the PC felt they needed more rationale on why the change is necessary. A friendly amendment asked for clarity on how the city would avoid financial penalties for current and potential owners.
- **Council asked the PC to Review and Update** Allowed Uses in the Industrial Zones. The current list of allowed uses in the Industrial zones includes outside storage as a principal use, which does not create quality jobs, does not add to the tax base, and is not attractive. In the past two years, two trailer parking lots have been added to the Industrial zone, bringing the total to three trailer parking lots. City Council therefore asked the Planning Commission to review the uses in the Industrial zones to eliminate outside storage as an allowed principal use; to identify additional uses that would provide opportunities for quality jobs, generate tax base and provide attractive facilities; and, to review the architecture and landscaping standards to determine if changes are needed to ensure attractive facilities that match Afton's desired character.
- **Directed** staff to draft an ordinance amendment to eliminate outside storage as a principal use in the Industrial zones, but to keep it as an accessory use and to schedule a public hearing for the January 9, 2017 Planning Commission meeting.
- **Continued** working on the Environmental section of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

City Council Meeting, December 20

- **Thanked** Deputy Sullivan for his dedicated and outstanding service to the city during his time assigned to the Afton area and congratulated him on his promotion to the Investigator position with the Sheriff's Department.
- **Held** the 2017 Budget and Tax Levy Hearing, which reflected a major effort to increase resources for street improvement needs; adopted the Final 2017 Budget and Tax Levy.
- **Approved** payment for the 2016 Crack Fill/Seal Coat Project in the amount of \$32,804.
- **Approved** a cost estimate of \$5,000 to \$7,500 for a hydraulic analysis for a permit to reduce the cost of a culvert replacement on 30th Street by approximately \$20,000.
- **Approved** expenditures of up to \$2,882.80 for required barricades and safety signage at the closed Putnam Boulevard bridge.
- **Approved** the use of bonding as a funding mechanism for an accelerated plan of street improvements. **Authorized** street improvements to be financed with street reconstruction bonds and directed staff to set in motion the process required to issue such bonds. **Directed** staff to move forward on a dual track with abatement bonds.
- **Approved** moving forward with the process of planning street improvements for construction in 2017 based on the priorities identified by the Public Works Committee.
- **Scheduled** a Special Council Meeting for January 12, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. to consider options for refinancing temporary bonds being used to provide temporary financing for the Downtown Village Improvements Project.
- **Authorized** the purchase of an electronic drop box through Dropbox Business to store and access accounting records at a cost of \$99 per year.
- **Appointed** Michael Pofahl to provide annual audit services for fiscal year 2016 at a cost not to exceed \$5,650.
- **Approved** Amendment No. 4 to the DNR Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Agreement to add \$15,000 of funding.
- **Approved** the replacement of seventeen dais and conference table chairs in the City Council Chambers at a cost of \$3,549.

Downtown Improvements Project Update

A consultation meeting with tribal government representatives to resolve their objections related to the Rattlesnake Mound was held on December 16, 2016. The City made a number of design changes to avoid construction activity in the area of the Mound which were positively received by the tribal representatives. These changes adequately addressed the concerns of the tribal governments. With the resolution of the tribal concerns, construction is being planned to begin in the spring of 2017, subject to weather and the level of the St. Croix River.

The Water Sampling Tests are IN!

The October nitrate testing results are in! All except two of the samples were below the federal drinking water standard of 10 mg/L! The two samples over 10 were in agricultural-zoned areas of the city. These waters are still safe to drink with the exception of infants under six months of age. Also, women who are pregnant are advised to check with their doctors.

It is not uncommon in farm country to find water from private wells to be over 10 mg/L. However, it's a reminder that good stewardship practiced by each of us, benefits all of us. A big thanks to each of the households participating in this sampling effort! We plan to do another sampling in the spring, so we hope to see many of you again along with many new participants.

— Natural Resources and Ground Water Committee



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P.O. BOX 219
AFTON, MN 55001



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PERMIT NO. 15

Valley Branch Library January Events

The Library is **CLOSED** Monday, January 16
for Martin Luther King, Jr Day

Internet Genealogy—Ancestry Library Edition

Thursday, Jan. 19, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Learn internet genealogy research using Ancestry Library Edition, a Washington County Library's subscription database. Must be proficient in the use of a mouse.



Register online, at the library, or call 651-436-5882.

STEM Saturday

Saturday, Jan. 21, 11 a.m. to noon

Explore STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) through hands-on activities and creative projects!

Handmade Memory Book

Tuesday, Jan. 24, 12 to 1:30 p.m.

Create a beautiful handmade hardcover memory book for drawing, painting and collaging. Program funded by the MN Arts and Cultural Heritage fund. Please register online, at the library, or call 651-436-5882.

Dog Gone Reading

Tuesday, Jan. 24, 4 to 6 p.m.

Children K-7 read aloud to certified therapy dog, Legacy. Sign up for 15 minute reading sessions at the library or call 436-5882.



Valley Library Book Club

Thursday, Jan. 26, 5 to 5:55 p.m.

"The Light Between Oceans" by M.L. Stedman. Read the book, come and discuss. Open to all.



PATRON
AFTON, MN 55001

View this newsletter
IN COLOR
on the city website.



Please recycle this
newsletter after use.

**Happy
New Year!**

Belwin Conservancy — — January Outdoor Activities

**Snow Shoe, XC-Ski or Walk at
Belwin – Open 365 Days a Year!**

Stagecoach Prairie and the trails surrounding the Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields (LWBAF) are open all year. They are ungroomed trails.



Parking for the 4.5 miles of trails on Stagecoach Prairie is on 11th Street just off Stagecoach Trail South. Use the Bison Prairie parking lot on Division Street for the 3 miles of LWBAF trails (entrance is across the street to the north).

2017 WASHINGTON COUNTY PARK RESERVATIONS

Mark your calendars!

Picnic Pavilions

On **January 10, 2017 at 8am** Washington County will begin taking reservations for Picnic Pavilions by phone or in-person.

Camping

Also on **January 10, 2017 at am**, Camping reservations will be available **ONLINE ONLY**.

Phone call and in-person camping reservations will open on **January 17**.

On-line reservations can be made at: <https://washingtoncounty.maxgalaxy.net>

Reservations by phone at Park Offices:

Big Marine Park Reserve • Lake Elmo Park Reserve • St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park
651-430-8200 651-430-8370 651-430-8240



Campsite at Lake Elmo Park