



October 2023

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

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

- ◆ The application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for short term home rental at 15711 Upper 34th Street has been withdrawn by the applicant.
- ◆ The Council approved a preliminary 2024 budget which calls for a 3.89% tax levy increase. Additional information regarding the 2024 budget will be provided in the November Newsletter.
- ◆ The City Council is very concerned and determined to preserve the beauty of the St. Croix River Valley. Therefore the Council has referred Shoreland Ordinance Amendments regarding tree protection and replacement to the Planning Commission for a public hearing. These amendments significantly increase the penalties for illegal vegetative cutting to \$2,000 per tree or more.
The ordinance amendments apply to the Lower St. Croix River Bluffland and Shoreland District, as well as to the general Shoreland District which includes lakes and streams. The Lower St. Croix River Bluffland and Shoreland District covers a large area along the river, from the water to the top of the bluffland. If you are not certain if you live in a shoreland district, please call City Hall. If you are in a shoreland district, always call the City before doing any vegetative cutting to obtain a permit. The city will send out its forester to consult on the proposed cutting. There is no fee for the permit, although a \$200 deposit will be held in escrow and refunded when the project is completed according to the permit.
- ◆ A one year moratorium on new applications for short term home rental licenses (1 – 30 day rentals) was approved by the council.

SAR

Free Curbside Mattress Recycling

We are partnering with Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy and several cities to provide free curbside mattress and box spring collection in October 2023.

Your residence must be within the city limits of Afton.

You must book a date online. The link to Second Chance Recycling will be live on September 27th and will be available on our city website that day.

When you book a date simply have the mattresses and box springs outside by **9:00am** where Second Chance drivers can see them for collection. Please note: if the day you select is your regular trash day please do not put the mattresses and box springs on the curb by your waste container to avoid any risk of the hauler taking them and billing you.

Weather does not impact the recycling process so don't worry if it's raining on your collection date.

There is no cost to you for the collection or recycling of your mattresses and box springs. If you need to change or cancel your collection, simply return to the link and reschedule. All bookings are attached to your address so they will see the change.

Thank you for making a significant impact on our environment by diverting as many mattresses and box springs from our landfills as possible. Your support allows us to create many jobs for those most in need and with significant barriers to employment.

<https://www.secondchancerecyclingmn.com/curbside-collection-program/>

CITY MEETINGS

October 2, 2023

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 PM

October 11, 2023

Heritage Preservation Committee Meeting
5:30 PM

October 17, 2023

City Council Meeting 7:00 PM

October 25, 2023

Parks Committee 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

<u>Mayor:</u>	Bill Palmquist	651-308-0569
<u>Ward 1:</u>	Annie Perkins	651-592-3007
<u>Ward 2:</u>	Lucia Wroblewski	651-436-3982
<u>Ward 3:</u>	Stan Ross	612-720-6478
<u>Ward 4:</u>	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

At its September 19 meeting, the council approved the preliminary budget and levy for 2024. This is due by September 30 each year and, once approved, the budget and levy can be reduced but not increased. Typically for our city, this preliminary budget is basically what will be passed at the December meeting as we have worked through the entire budget development process before this first deadline. This year, however, there are still some areas we will be discussing over the next few months. This might result in some line items shifting around or possibly being reduced, but my feeling is we will end up at or near this overall final number which calls for a 3.89% budget increase in 2024.

This budget includes significant increases in funding for streets and infrastructure to meet the goals of our long-term local road improvement plan. We are also adding funding for additional help for public works as well as code enforcement. Inflation has impacted some of our ongoing expenses as well, leading to larger than normal increases in things such as our public safety expenses. Overall, I think this is a good preliminary budget and should ensure the city is able to meet its responsibilities in 2024.

Also, at the September meeting, the council voted to place a moratorium on new short-term home rental licenses while we look at ways to improve the ordinance. As I wrote last month, we are among many cities who are struggling with how to handle the increased number of properties being put to this use. There are both short term enforcement issues and long term community impacts to consider as we continue to review this ordinance. This action does not affect anyone who already holds an approved license or conditional use permit. This is for new applications only. This topic will be discussed at work sessions over the next few months and we will continue to use our newsletter to keep you informed on any changes that are being considered.

-Bill



Margaret Bonga Fahlstrom & Jacob Fahlstrom.

The Afton Museum invites you to a presentation on the life of Margaret Bonga Fahlstrom (1797-1880)

Thursday, October 19, 2023
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Margaret Bonga Fahlstrom – a woman of mixed African and Ojibwe ancestry, was from a remarkable & prominent fur trade family. She grew up in Ojibwe country in the early 1800s. In 1850 she moved to Afton with her husband, a fur trader who figures prominently in early state narratives as the first Swede to live in Minnesota.

Margaret Bonga Fahlstrom's life story provides meaningful insight into local and regional history & illustrates the shifting nature of identity in the region over time.

About the speaker: Dr. Mattie Harper DeCarlo is a direct descendant of Margaret's brother George Bonga. She has a doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley in Ethnic Studies and is a citizen of the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe.

RSVP by Oct 16: 651-436-3500 / info@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com

Beverages & light refreshments served. Museum donations appreciated. Afton Museum, 3165 St. Croix Trail S., Afton, MN 55001



Halloween Costume Swap Washington County Environmental Center

The Washington County Environmental will be host to a Halloween Costume Swap.

Costume drop-off will be between Sept. 12 and Oct. 10, and costume shopping will be 3 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11.

Bring your clean, gently-used children's costumes to the Environmental Center between Sept. 12 and Oct. 10. Donations will be accepted in the drive-through lane and inside the main entrance of the Free Product Room. The Environmental Center at 4039 Cottage Grove Drive in Woodbury is open:

- Tuesday: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
- Thursday: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Friday: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Saturday: 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Costume shopping day will be 3 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11.

Visit the Free Product Room at the Environmental Center to browse for free, pre-used costumes. Donations are not required to receive a costume; costumes will be limited to one per child.

Meeting Highlights

August 28, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for an application for a Conditional Use Permit at 15711 Upper 34th St for a Type C Home Rental License.

September 19, 2023 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Approved an updated Fee Schedule for Administrative Civil Citations.
- Approved the 2024 Proposed Preliminary Budget & Tax Levy.
- Approved the 2024 Sanitary Sewer Rate
- Approved a moratorium on Short Term Home Rental applications.

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

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Oxbow Trails, the newest hiking trail at Belwin Conservancy, will be open for the rest of fall. Containing 1.25 miles of wood chipped trails, the area will close for the season following the first major snow-storm. The trail is located at 2398 St Croix Trail South, Afton, MN, 55001.

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

Final Well Water Test Results

In June 2023 Afton residents were given the opportunity to have their well water tested for nitrates and coliform bacteria. Some 155 requests for sample kits were made, but only 130 kits were available for Afton Residents. Of the 130 kits sent out, 112 were returned for analysis. The EPA drinking water standard for safe water is 10mg/L (milligrams per liter) or less for nitrate-nitrogen. Coliform testing is reported as absent or present.

Nitrate results ranged from 0.05 (not detected) to 17.93 (see chart). Higher levels were again noted in the more western parts of Afton (more open, frequently agriculture now or in the past) and lower to the east and south (more trees, less agriculture now or in past).

Twenty-two samples tested positive for coliform bacteria, but none grew E. Coli (the type of coliform bacteria that could indicate sewage contamination). These wells were scattered throughout Afton. Washington County sends out instructions on the use of a bleach solution that can to be used to disinfect a well that shows the presence of any coliform growth for those wells testing positive for coliform growth. This year there was no good correlation between nitrate levels and the presence of any coliforms. Of the 63 wells with results of 0.05 (no nitrates found), 10 grew coliforms (16%) while of the 9 samples with nitrates > 10 only 1 grew coliforms (11%). Of note there were 4 wells testing positive for coliforms in the Old Village.

Ongoing testing of well water for both nitrates and coliform bacteria is the best way for well owners to monitor the suitability of their drinking water. This information allows one to take corrective action if needed. With increased participation in this city sponsored well water sampling program more data are provided to help understand the health of our shared valuable water resource—our drinking water.

In the future we hope to continue to provide sampling opportunities to the residents of Afton, and we encourage you to participate in this project. The maps for the 2023 Afton Well Water sample program can be viewed on the City of Afton’s website: <https://www.ci.afton.mn.us/index.asp?SEC=AFCE252C-CAE0-42C8-9869-10208D16930C>

The members of the NRGCC would like to again thank the City Council for their ongoing support for this program. We also wish to thank all those residents who participated, and hope those who could not participate will try next year.

NITRATE LEVEL	NUMBER OF SAMPLES	NUMBER WITH COLIFORMS	%
0-2.0	80	15	19
0-0.05	63	10	16
0.06-2.0	17	5	29
2.1-2.5	12	1	8
5.1-10.0	11	5	45
>10	9	1	11
TOTAL	112	22	20



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

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

Valley Library Events & Important Dates
Closed Wednesday Oct. 11 for Staff Training

For Adults:
Thursday, October 12th 5:00-6:00 PM
 Local resident and author, Don Jones, will present *18 Days Across the Atlantic*.

Saturday October 28th 11:00am – 1:00 PM Fiery Fall in acrylic paint with Karen Chan.

The Valley Library Book Club meets 5:00-6:00pm on the 4th Thursday of every month.

For Kids:
Every Monday 10:30-11:00 AM Family Story time

Thursday, October 5th 3:30-5:30 PM
 Brick Builder's Club

Thursday, October 19th 4:00-6:00 PM
 Crochet Pumpkin class

Monday October 23rd 10:30 AM Siama and Dallas – Siama's Congo Roots

For 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



Please recycle this newsletter after use.

**Special Election
November 7, 2023**

The Stillwater School District (ISD 834) and the South Washington County School District (ISD 833) will hold a Special Election this fall.

- **Early in-person voting** begins Friday, Sept. 22 and ends Monday, Nov. 6 at the Cottage Grove Service Center, Stillwater Government Center and Woodbury Service Center—Central Park.
- **The polling location for Afton residents on Election Day** is Shepherd of the Valley, 14107 Hudson Rd S. from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 7.
- View your **sample ballot** at mnvotes.org.
- To vote **early by mail**, visit mnvotes.org or call 651-430-6790 and request an absentee application be sent to you.



Drain your swimming pool safely!

1

Discharging chlorinated pool or hot tub water into the street or a lake, stream or wetland, can kill fish and aquatic life.

2

Stop adding chlorine and leave the water exposed to the air for 3-5 days to naturally break-down the chlorine.

3

One water is dechlorinated, you can safely drain it to your yard.