



November 2020

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

General Election November 3, 2020

Voting Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church

East Entrance - Gymnasium

14107 Hudson Road S

Afton, MN 55001



City of Afton Dashboard: A summary of current happenings

- ◆ 3M PFAS Settlement – While only a small number of private wells in Afton are projected to become contaminated with PFAS over the long term, the city continues to participate in working group meetings to affirm the need for sufficient funding for the installation and maintenance of water filtration systems on private wells in Afton that become contaminated.
- ◆ Afton Marina Lawsuit - the Court has set a preliminary trial date of April, 2021 on the remaining claim to resolve disputed factual issues related to a driveway permit application.
- ◆ Lake Edith – the landowner who clear-cut much of the vegetation between his home and the shore of Lake Edith, a violation of city ordinances, has been formally charged regarding the violations. After some technical processing delays, the formal criminal complaint against the landowner is proceeding forward. In addition to the payment of fines related to the formal charges, the landowner will be required to replace the trees that were removed based on a tree replacement plan to be approved by the City.
- ◆ Public Works – over the last year there have been four separate instances of severe damage to our local roads caused by contractors hauling heavy loads. Since road maintenance is the City’s single largest cost item, the City is now requiring a grading permit so that Public Works will be alerted prior to hauling in an effort to prevent potential damage to our roads. This permit includes all new home construction, all new or old driveway construction, septic system repairs, replacement septic systems and new septic systems.
- ◆ St. Croix Bluffland Overlay District - did you know that the city requires a permit for any tree cutting in this zone in order to protect the scenic quality of the river valley? To find out if your property falls within this district, go to https://www.ci.afton.mn.us/vertical/sites/%7B255148F5-88B9-45F6-9726-DD95D24AA1ID%7D/uploads/Lower_St._Croix_Bluffland_Overlay_Map.pdf. Then find the solid black boundary line running vertically just west of the downtown village area. All land between this line and the St. Croix River is in the overlay district.
- ◆ Federal CARES funding – in order to improve communications with the public, the City Council has approved significant upgrades to the City Council Chambers A/V system so that meetings will be live streamed to the public. In addition, residents that would like to give public input via Zoom video conferencing computer software can do so.

- SAR

CITY OFFICE CLOSED

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

Thursday, November 26, 2020

Friday, November 27, 2020

CITY MEETINGS

The regular meetings of the Planning Commission and City Council are being held remotely. Other Volunteer Commissions and Committees are canceled for November unless otherwise noted below. Remote meetings of those committees may be held if timely action is needed and if properly noticed.

November 2, 2020

Planning Commission Meeting

7:00 P.M.

(To be held remotely)

November 17, 2020

City Council Meeting

7:00 P.M.

(To be held remotely)

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 comment period for the use of the 3M PFAS settlement funds has been extended to December 10. This was done to give cities more time to weigh in on the three draft conceptual drinking water supply plan options the MPCA and DNR (the Trustees of the settlement funds) have put forward based on the work of a consultant team and work groups with representatives from the east metro cities. Prior to this extension being granted, I had a meeting with the assistant commissioners at the MPCA and DNR who are leading the effort to implement the settlement. Overall, they answered several questions and concerns I had. But as a city, we will still need to articulate our expectations for Afton when it comes to the use of these funds and protecting our homeowners and the private wells we all rely upon. The main concern we have is the funding set aside for private wells that may become contaminated in the future if the plume moved in ways currently not expected. Although the likelihood of that seems small, ensuring those property owners are treated equitably if it were to happen 5, 10, or even 20 years from now is our top priority.

At our October meeting we continued our discussion about ways to ensure new property owners are aware of some of the special rules in place that help protect our environment in Afton. This includes the development limitations imposed by the Riverway District along the St. Croix River, how scenic easements and protections of steep slopes impact all areas of the city, current limits to vegetative cutting near waterways, to name only a few. I believe strongly that when people know the rules and see how those rules have protected the environment that makes Afton unique, they will not only abide by them, but they will become the next generation of stewards of the land. In the last few years we have learned we need to be more proactive to prevent problems before they occur. We discussed ways to make that happen and will continue to do so. If you have thoughts on this, please share them with us.

The city received CARES funding from the federal government to offset the costs we have incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding will also allow us to upgrade parts of city hall and our technology to better enable citizen participation during this time of remote meetings. It is also our hope that these investments will enable us to reopen with more normal operations sooner and safer. This includes work on the ventilation system, the actual lay out of the city hall chambers, audio/video enhancements, and the ability for residents to pay any bills or permit fees electronically. We will update everyone as these projects are completed.

Also at the October meeting the council voted to increase the monthly compensation in 2021 for council members from \$200 to \$250 per month, and the mayor from \$300 to \$350 per month. The last time any change was made was in 2006. A recent survey found Afton's compensation was significantly lower than similar cities in our area. Although this change does not bring it up to the level of most of those other cities, no one runs for office here based on the salary. But this change keeps it in the ballpark and makes some adjustment for inflation since 2006.

-Bill

Budget and Tax Hearing

All are Invited to Attend Afton's 2020 Budget and Tax Hearing

7:00 pm, Tuesday, December 15, 2020

**Meeting will be held via Zoom
Instructions on how to attend will be posted
on the city website.**

The hearing is an opportunity for the public to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the proposed budget.

**The 2021 Proposed Budget is available at
City Hall or on the City's website at:**

www.ci.afton.mn.us

(Click the top tab: "City Finance Information")

Meeting Highlights

October 5, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing on an ordinance amendment regarding Architectural Standards for Institutional Use Structures and provided recommendations to the City Council.
- Reviewed a draft ordinance amendment requiring the Lower St. Croix Bluffland and Shoreland Management Overlay District Regulations to be provided to buyers of property in the district.

October 20, 2020 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Extended the declaration of local emergency.
- Approved an ordinance amendment regarding Architectural Standards for Institutional Structures Ord 08-2020.
- Approved final payment to InSite Contracting Inc for the Valley Creek bridge guard rail improvements.
- Approved final payment to Allied Blacktop for the 2020 crack filling project.
- Approved an extension to gather more information for the Osborn application for simple subdivision at 3850 Oakgreen.
- Approved final payment to Executive Contractors for the 30th St. Improvement Project.
- Approved increase in City Council compensation from \$200 to \$250 per month for council; from \$300 to \$350 per month for mayor.

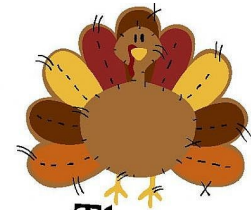
MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:
www.ci.afton.mn.us

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Education Center Third Saturday
 November 21, 2020 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Explore the Belwin Education Center and its miles of rolling, wooded trails. The Education Center building will be open for check in, directions, and restrooms. Face masks are required to enter the building. *Belwin Conservancy is pleased to be able to open the Education Center trails to the public once a month. Thanks to our staff and volunteers for making this possible*

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



Happy Thanksgiving

Want to get involved in CITY DECISIONS?

Do you have an interest in architecture, historic buildings and preserving Afton's heritage? **The Heritage Preservation / Design Review Commission** is looking for members with an architectural background.

The HPC/DR meets to review projects to ensure they meet the City's Design Standards for the Old Village. Meetings are monthly or as needed.

Applications are available on the city website, or by calling City Hall at 651-436-5090.



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



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

Valley Library November 2020

Valley Library is open with limited capacity and modified hours. Visitors can come to pick up holds, browse materials, and use computers without an appointment. Our meeting rooms will remain closed.

When visiting Valley Library, please help protect everyone in the library by:

- Wearing a mask in the building.
- Practicing social distancing from other visitors and staff.
- Keeping your library visit to one hour or less.

Valley Branch Library

384 St Croix Trail S
Lakeland, MN 55043
651-436-5882

www.washcolib.org

Open with limited capacity. Current hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday:
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday: 12 to 7 p.m.

**PATRON
AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter

IN COLOR
on the city website.



*Please recycle this
newsletter after use.*

Pet License Renewals Due

ALL DOGS (& cats) that venture out-of-doors in Afton are required to be licensed and have current rabies vaccinations. This is for the health & safety of residents, pets and wildlife.

Two year licenses for altered pets is \$5; unaltered is \$10. Current license period is January 1, 2021 — December 31, 2022. *(What a deal!!)* **An additional \$5 late fee applies after March 31.**

For each pet, complete an Animal License Form, found on Afton's Home Page, attach a copy of the current rabies vaccination certificate and appropriate fee per animal. Mail or bring to City Hall.

Randy Kopesky Memorial Veterans Recognition Curbside Dinner

Thursday, November 12, 2020

**CURBSIDE PICKUP at
The Church of St. Francis of Assisi
Lake Saint Croix Beach**

FREE Chicken Dinner - for Lower St. Croix Valley Veterans, Service Members, and their Families

Reservations by NOVEMBER 7th

Email: ddmsjames@gmail.com or

Phone: Mary 651-436-8696

Curbside Pickup time 5:00 – 6:30 pm

Thank You for your service!

