



**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
AGENDA**

**AFTON CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
3033 St. Croix Trail South
Monday, December 10, 2018
At 5:00 p.m.**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – December 10, 2018 City Council Work Session**
- 4. CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS**
 - A. Sewer Fees for River Road Residents Who Were on the 201 Septic System
 - B. Shared Driveways and Preservation and Land Conservation Developments
- 5. ADJOURN**

A quorum of the City Council or Other Commissions may be present to receive information at, but not limited to, any of the following meetings: Planning Commission; the Public Works Committee; Parks Committee; Design Review and Heritage Preservation Commission; Lower St. Croix Cable Commission; LSCWMO; MSCWMO; I-94 Corridor Coalition and the 5-City Mayor's Alliance.

City of Afton
3033 St. Croix Trl, P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001

Meeting Date Dec. 10, 2018

Council Memo

To: Mayor Bend and Members of the City Council
 From: Ron Moore, City Administrator
 Date: December 6, 2018
 Re: Sewer Fees for River Road Residents Who Were on the 201 Septic System

Background Regarding the River Road 201 Septic Collection and Treatment System

There are twelve properties that, since the late 1980's, were connected to the 201 community mound septic system. The 201 system involved individual septic tanks to collect the solids and no drainfields, because sewer lines and lift stations transported the liquids to the community mound septic system north of river road. The community mound system has now been replaced by a connection to the new downtown sanitary sewer system and its large lift station that pumps wastewater to the new wastewater treatment system. The two lift stations on River Road have been upgraded to handle both solids and liquids. However, the sizes and slopes of the sanitary sewer lines are not large enough to accommodate both solids and liquids, even when they are run through grinder pumps in the lift stations. While the properties are now connected to the new system, they are not, at this time, able to abandon their septic tanks.

Sewer Fees

A. 201 System Sewer Fees

The River Road properties have been paying sewer fees based on the semi-annual costs to maintain the 201 system. The total costs have been divided among the properties. There have been three tiers of fees based on the number of sewer units applied to the properties. The fees paid for the years 2014 – 2017 are outlined below. The highest fees were unusual and were due to substantial repairs needed to the River Road lift stations.

<u>Tier</u>	<u>No. of properties</u>	<u>Average fee per month</u>	<u>Highest fee per month</u>
Highest tier	6	\$41 per month,	\$109/month
Middle tier	3	\$32 per month	\$84 per month
Lowest tier	2	\$19 per month	\$50 per month

B. Downtown Sewer System Fees

Each single-family residential property has been assigned one sewer unit. The fee for one sewer unit is \$50.00 per month.

C. Level of Service for River Road Properties

The River Road properties have benefited from the Downtown Improvement Project through the replacement of the two River Road lift stations that were at the end of their useful lives and were requiring either costly repairs or replacement, the costs of which would have been divided among the River Road properties. The River Road properties are also now connected to the new wastewater treatment system rather than the community mound system, which eliminates their responsibility for the maintenance or replacement of the mound system.

However, the River Road properties are not currently able to take full advantage of the new sewer system, because they still need to use their septic tanks. Staff is not aware of any problems with the current septic tanks. The property owners are required to have the tanks pumped every three years.

D. Options for River Road Sewer Fee

Based on the benefits of being connected to the new sewer system, with an offset for the need to continue to use their septic tanks, the sewer fees to be charged to the River Road residents should be set at a significant percentage of the \$50 per month fee charged to other single-family residential properties. The following is a set of options:

- 90%: \$45 per month
- 80%: \$40 per month
- 70%: \$35 per month
- 60%: \$30 per month.

If the fee was set at \$40 per month, the \$10 per month reduction would be a \$360 reduction over three years, which is approximately the cost of the septic tank pumping.

Communication with the River Road Residents

An explanation regarding the sewer fee will need to be provided to the River Road residents. This could be provided through a letter or a neighborhood meeting. One option would be to send a letter that explains the fee, but also asks residents to contact the City regarding whether they would be interested in attending a neighborhood meeting regarding the fee.

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Re: Shared Driveways and Preservation and Land Conservation Developments

The Council added the topic of shared driveways to the process of reviewing and clarifying language in the Preservation and Land Conservation Development (PLCD) ordinance, and directed that the shared driveways topic be discussed in a work session. The topic of shared driveways was included in the discussion of the PLCD ordinance as a possible option for encouraging and facilitating the development of very large lots, such as 40 acre lots, with the condition that further subdivision of the lots would be prohibited through a conservation easement.

Benefits of the shared driveway option that were noted in the Council's discussion were as follows:

- Would lock up very low density in perpetuity
- Would eliminate the need for a public road, which would limit the environmental impact and reduce the number of public roads the City needs to maintain.

Concerns noted regarding the shared driveway option were as follows:

- Could result in properties in the Ag zone being developed earlier than if this option was not available
- Could result in conflict between the driveway users related to the on-going maintenance of the driveway
- Could result in pressure to allow shared driveways in other situations
- Could result in lots without frontage on a public road
- Because the Minnesota Land Trust would probably not be interested in holding a conservation easement in the shared driveway scenario, an easement holder would need to be identified who would hold the easement in perpetuity.