



February 2024

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

City of Afton Dashboard
A Summary of Current Happenings

- ◆ The City Engineer inspects the city's bridges periodically to ensure their safety and to determine whether any maintenance or repairs are needed. Three bridges were recently inspected and were found to be in good condition and without the need for any maintenance or repairs.
- ◆ The Council is in the process of reviewing the current short term home rental ordinance to determine if revisions are needed to minimize impacts of short term home rentals.
- ◆ The City recently met with the patrol sergeant for the Lower St. Croix Valley cities to begin planning for the annual speed enforcement patrols in Afton that will begin in the spring and run through the summer. The City has also purchased a second radar speed trailer. The speed trailers help to slow traffic by displaying the speeds of vehicles. They also collect data on speeds that is helpful in identifying areas where speed enforcement patrols are needed.

Presidential Primary Election
March 5, 2024

Information on the Presidential Primary Election and how it works can be found at mnvotes.org.

- **Early in-person voting** begins Friday, January 19 and ends Monday, March 4 at the Cottage Grove Service Center, Stillwater Government Center and Woodbury City Hall.
Hours are:
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 2: 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Monday, March 4: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- **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, March 5.
- 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.

The City Office is Closed

Monday, February 19

In observance of Presidents Day

CITY MEETINGS

February 5, 2024

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 PM

February 6, 2024

Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee Meeting
5:00 PM

February 2024 TBD

Heritage Preservation Commission
6:00 PM

February 20, 2024

City Council Meeting
7:00 PM

February 28, 2024

Parks Committee
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

Notes from the Mayor

The ice rink at Town Square Park is up and running. The warming house is ready. Many thanks to Bob Dickie for his hours of coordination and labor getting the rink set up again this year and to the volunteers who helped. This is the second year of the new style rink and of volunteers installing it instead of the city. The volunteers stepped up to build this new rink when the city could no longer flood a large area of the park for ice skating, due to drainage changes made to prevent problems caused by large rain events. This rink is a bit on the small side as we see how it works and if it is a solution that will work going forward. If the rink works well, and our volunteers report they are ready to expand it, I hope the rink can be made larger next year.

At its January meeting, the council made all of the annual appointments that are required each new year, including those that enable Council members to continue to be involved with internal volunteer committees and external organizations that benefit the city. The Council also heard an update on the re-codification of our code of ordinances. Based on feedback received from the Planning Commission, we will be updating how the ordinances are organized and making minor technical changes, and I believe this will make the code of ordinances easier for residents and staff to work with. The recodification process remains ongoing and should be completed in the next month or so.

As noted elsewhere in the newsletter, we have openings on several of our volunteer committees. If you have the ability to get involved please do!

-Bill

Did you live in the Afton area before or during the 1950s? If so, the Afton Museum would like to interview you for its permanent oral history collection. If interested, please contact the museum at 651-436-3500 or info@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com for more information.

Groundwater

Groundwater is a critical resource for the residents of Afton. The City Council has supported the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC) in its efforts to make people aware of the importance of clean water, and has supported efforts to provide well water sampling programs testing for Nitrates and coliform bacteria. What the issues might be and how to understand the results of testing can be confusing. Washington County has created 3 Fact Sheets to provide useful information for County residents (Interpretation of water sample results, Coliform bacteria in drinking water, and Nitrate in drinking water). Last updated in July 2019, these 3 Fact Sheets can be found on the City of Afton's website. These can be located in the reference material associated with the NRGC. Scroll down in the Government tab on the main page to NRGC and click on REFERENCE MATERIALS.

<https://www.ci.afton.mn.us/index.asp?SEC=AFCE252C-CAE0-42C8-9869-10208D16930C>

Also included in the REFERENCE MATERIALS page is information from prior well water collections (results from 2016, 2022, and 2023), and Afton's Natural Resources Inventory. The NRGC encourages you to review these resources. We also wish to make you aware that we are planning on another well water sampling program this year.

The **Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC)** is in need of additional members. The NRGC focuses on issues of environmental stewardship. Committee members coordinate the annual well water testing and attend area and regional meetings concerning the quality and quantity of water and other resources important to Afton. These issues are brought back to City Council with recommendations on actions. The Committee typically meets the first Tuesday of the month at 5:00 PM.

Applications are available on the city website or at City Hall.

Meeting Highlights

January 8, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing on the recodified City Code.

January 16, 2024 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Approved a variance application for a garage at 16530 Swede Hill Dr S.
- Approved annual appointments for 2024.
- Designated the City Engineer and City Attorney for 2024.

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

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Midwinter Family Fun

Saturday, February 3rd, 2024

5:00 - 7:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy will host Midwinter Family Fun. This night of outdoor activities features hikes through the snow guided by Belwin naturalists, stargazing with Minnesota Astronomical Society, and s'mores around the campfire. Children's education will be front and center this year, with a guided hike by Jenny Hanlon of Stillwater Early Childhood Family Education at 5:45 pm, and representatives from the University of Minnesota's "Bugs Below Zero" team present throughout the evening. The event is free and will take place at the Hilltop Classroom at Belwin's Education Site (1553 Stagecoach Trail South, Afton, MN, 55001). Warm drinks will be available for visitors indoors

Winter Wandering

Sunday, February 4th, 2024

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom
 1553 Stagecoach Trail, Afton MN 55001

Presented in partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools Community Education

Cost: (sliding scale) \$20, \$25, or \$29

Join us for a morning of exploring the world of winter! We will look for signs of life and figure out how animals survive the cold. Dress in layers and come prepared to spend most of the time outside on the trail. RSVP required.

Women Walking

Saturday, March 16th, 2024

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom 1553
 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, MN 55001

Cost: (Sliding scale) \$20, \$35, or \$50

Come and help us celebrate the seasonal changes in the natural world. Vernal Equinox, Summer Solstice, Autumnal Equinox, Winter Solstice, each brings us to a new season, a new place in our annual trip around the sun. We will gather together indoors to share easy, yogic centering exercises and a brief conversation about our theme. We will then move out to the woods and prairies for walking meditations and experiences in the natural world. We will end our time together with light refreshments around the fire. Led by Lynette Anderson. Wear comfortable layers and be prepared for any weather. Open to women over the age of 16. RSVP required.

For details and registration contact:

Belwin Conservancy

1553 Stagecoach Trail South

Afton MN 55001

651-436-5189

www.belwin.org

Blood Drive

Memorial Lutheran Church of Afton is hosting a Blood Drive on Tuesday, February 27th from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

Register at: redcrossblood.org

Or call 1-800-733-2767

Memorial Lutheran Church
 15730 S Afton Blvd
 Afton, MN 55001



**American
Red Cross**

Electronics Recycling

Did you upgrade your computer or TV this holiday season? Bring old computers, TVs and other electronics to the Environmental Center for recycling.

All electronics received at the Environmental Center are shipped to Dynamic Lifestyle Innovations. Reusable items are sent to their recovery division for data sanitization, testing, refurbishment, and resale. No need to wipe or damage your hard drive.

Materials not suitable for any kind of reuse are fully recycled. After being fully and securely data sanitized, materials are completely demanufactured, dismantled, and separated into metals, glasses, and plastics so they can be used to make new products.

Washington County Environmental Center

4039 Cottage Grove Drive

Woodbury, MN 55129

Phone: 651-275-7475



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AFTON, MN 55001

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Valley Library Events & Important Dates

Closed February 19 for Presidents Day

Did you know one of the instant prizes for Winter Reads is an adorable red winter hat? Simply submit a review of ANY book, either in person or online, and win an instant prize for your first review. All reviews become entries for grand prizes awarded at the end of the Winter Reads program. For more information, including a link to the online review form, go to <https://www.washcolib.org/397/Winter-Reads>

The Valley Library Community Recipe Swap continues into February. The library will build the recipe swap through February 15th. The online recipe form can be found at <https://bit.ly/40VZyXj>; blank paper forms are available in the library. All submitted recipes are on display now to copy or photograph. The Recipe swap goes through **February 29th**. A huge thank you to those who have submitted recipes already! Keep them coming!

For Adults:

The Valley Library Book Club meets 5:00-6:00pm on the 4th Thursday of every month. This book club meets in person in the Valley Library conference room but a Microsoft Teams link can be provided for those who wish to join virtually.

For Kids:

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

Monday, February 12 10:30-11:00AM Super Storytime

Thursday, February 8 3:30-5:30 Brick Builder's Club
Drop by to design, build and create with LEGO bricks. No registration required. This program is recommended for ages 5-12.

Ongoing: Scavenger Hunt –theme:

Famous Astronauts
Find 10 images throughout the library and win a prize.

The Valley Library Art Cart is available whenever the library is open. We provide the supplies and you provide the creativity!

For complete 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.

Volunteers needed to drive veterans to medical appointments
Washington County Veterans Services is recruiting volunteer drivers to shuttle Washington County veterans to medical appointments at the Veterans Administration, or VA, using vans provided by the Disabled American Veterans, or DAV.

Rides are free. Driver training is provided by the VA. Volunteer may drive as much or as little as they prefer.

Volunteer drivers may call the DAV transportation coordinator at 612-467-2768. Volunteering to drive veterans to VA medical appointments helps ensure veterans receive vital medical care.

Washington County provides parking for two vans from the DAV, one of which is parked at the county Government Center in Stillwater, and the other of which is parked at the transit center in Forest Lake.

Veterans needing rides may also call 612-467-2768 and request a ride.

