



**March 2017**

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

**March 7 Public Information Meeting -  
Downtown Village Improvements Project**

Construction on the Downtown Village Improvements Project is planned to begin in the spring. A public information meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 7 at 7:00 p.m. at the Memorial Lutheran Church, 15730 Afton Boulevard, to share information regarding the overall timing and staging plan for

The East Metro Water Resource Education Program & Master Gardeners in Washington County invite you to join them for some Spring Dreaming with their 2017 line-up for Spring Landscaping workshops. Enjoy an evening with your community & get helpful advice from Master Gardeners and Water Resource Educators.

The workshops are informal and help with ideas & how-tos for your property including:

- Backyard composting;
- Managing drainage and erosion issues using rain gardens, swales, dry creeks while protecting water resources;
- Creating habitat for pollinators, birds and wildlife on your property;
- Alternative to lawns, such as no-mow and bee lawns.

All Times are 6:30 P.M. and you should RSVP to the workshops at: [tinyurl.com/SpringDream2017](http://tinyurl.com/SpringDream2017)

- April 06 - N. St Paul Casey Lake Park Bldg.
- April 11 - St. Paul Park City Hall
- April 18 - Oakdale Wash. Conservation Dist. Office
- April 27 - Hugo City Hall
- May 02 - Forest Lake City Hall

*RSVPs received at least 2 days before the workshop will receive a free aerial print out of their property to use during the workshop.*

**SEASONAL LOAD LIMIT  
NOTIFICATION**

Date: February 16, 2017

The ENDING DATE for Winter Load Increases in the CENTRAL FROST ZONE will be Monday, February 20, 2017 at 12:01AM.

The STARTING DATE for Spring Load Restrictions in the CENTRAL FROST ZONE will be Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 12:01AM.

Removal of Winter Load Increases and start of Spring Load Restrictions in the SOUTH, SOUTHEAST and METRO FROST ZONES have already been scheduled for Friday, February 17.

Road Restriction maps indicating the locations of weight restricted routes and those state highways open to maximum ten-ton axle weights are listed on the MnDOT Seasonal Load Limits website at [www.mndot.gov/loadlimits](http://www.mndot.gov/loadlimits).

Click on "Spring Load Restrictions." Also available is a text list of the restricted segments along with exceptions to the map.

**CITY MEETINGS**

**March 6, 2017**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**March 7, 2017**

Natural Resources and Groundwater  
Committee  
6:30

**March 15, 2017**

Heritage Preservation Commission  
5:00 P.M.

**March 21, 2017**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**March 29, 2017**

Parks Committee  
*(Will be cancelled if no agenda items.)*  
6:00 P.M.

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

**CITY COUNCIL**

- Mayor: Richard Bend 436-7727
- 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](http://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 Dept 439-9381

**EMERGENCY 911**

## A Letter from the Mayor

In my capacity as Afton's weed inspector I am this month going to begin a short series to provide resources for identifying and managing invasive terrestrial plants. I am also going to provide personal observations regarding invasive plants and trees that are often overlooked and comment on often-used control methods that if misused, damage native plants. By using these resources or by hiring a knowledgeable company to insure the vegetation on your property is native, you insure that you will not get complaints from neighbors or letters from me notifying you that failure to control invasive species may result in the city doing so and charging you for the cost. Let me soften the threat, however. Only once has a resident complaint required that I send a threatening letter and in that case, the owner of the infested property promptly took care of the problem.

Pre-settlement Afton consisted of roughly one-third oak savannah, one-third deciduous forest and one-third prairie. For a more complete description of Afton vegetative communities, see the following section of Afton's Natural Resource Inventory on Afton's website: (Maps at the end of this material will allow you to place your land in one of these three original biomes.) [http://www.ci.afton.mn.us/vertical/sites/%7B255148F5-88B9-45F6-9726-DD95D24AA1D%7D/uploads/III\\_The\\_Landscape\\_of\\_Afton.pdf](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us/vertical/sites/%7B255148F5-88B9-45F6-9726-DD95D24AA1D%7D/uploads/III_The_Landscape_of_Afton.pdf)

In many cases, the best and cheapest path to a more natural environment is by simply controlling invasives and letting the surprisingly resilient natural species recolonize your property. I have been surprised to find plants I hadn't seen since childhood reappear once I did this on my own property.

The following MN DNR link provides a PDF file with descriptions and images of common MN invasives: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/vegetation/pdf/noxiousweeds.pdf>

Next month, I will discuss a few often-overlooked invasive trees and shrubs, as well as the use and misuse of invasive control

### **Downtown Improvements Project Update**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is moving the 106 process to a conclusion, as the objections from tribal governments regarding the Rattlesnake Mound have been resolved.

This will allow construction to begin in the spring. A public information meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 7 at 7:00 p.m. at the Memorial Lutheran Church, 15730 Afton Boulevard, to share information regarding the overall timing and staging plan for the construction.



### **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Field**

#### **Workshops**

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) staff will be leading free EAB Field Workshops in Saint Paul. These hour-long outdoor workshops will provide an opportunity to get a firsthand look at EAB-infested trees and will assist the community in becoming familiar with early detection. General EAB biology, distribution, management, regulation and treatment will also be covered. Workshops are provided free of charge through support from the US Forest Service.

**Registration:** The registration form is available at [www.mda.state.mn.us/eab](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/eab) or by calling 651-201-6097.

Maps and parking instructions will be provided by e-mail with registration confirmation. Below is a listing of all the workshop sessions available on March 1, 2 or 3, 2017 with times at: 9-10 am, 10:30-11:30 am, or 1:30-2:30 pm.

Planning Commission, February 6 Meeting Canceled—No Quorum

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City Council Meeting, February 21

The Council received an update from Matt Moore, of the South Washington Watershed district, regarding the District’s accomplishments in 2016 and work plan for 2017.

The Council approved the Afton Historical Museum’s application for temporary liquor licenses for three community events in 2017, and approved waiving the license fees.

The Council received the monthly budget report from Tom Niedzwiecki, City Accountant. The report was focused on the \$265,000 General Fund operating surplus for 2016.

The Council adopted a resolution approving the plans and specifications for the 2017 Street Improvements Project and authorizing advertisement for bids.

The Council approved agreements with Washington County and the Lower St. Croix Valley Community Foundation regarding funding and construction of the St. Croix Trail Recreational Trail Improvement Project.

The Council approved a revised proposal from WSB for design engineering services for the 2017 Street Improvements Project, which reduced the fee amount from \$150,000 to \$100,000.

The Council approved a proposal for construction inspection and other on-site engineering services for the 2017 Street Improvements Project in the amount of \$47,103.

The Council approved obtaining price quotes for culvert replacements related to the 2017 Street Improvements Project, so that the culvert work could be completed prior to the road construction work.

The Council approved the sale of \$2 million of General Obligation Temporary Improvement Bonds, with an interest rate of 1.4%, to provide interim funding for the Downtown Village Improvements Project.

The Council approved moving forward with a bond sale in the amount of \$3.5 million to finance the 2017 Street Improvements Project.

The Council adopted a resolution to complete the annual appointments for 2017

The Council approved the appointments of Bake Baker to the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee and Maureen Acosta to the Grants Committee.

The Council approved a temporary pay adjustment for the Office Assistant during her interim assignment taking on the duties of the City Clerk position.

The Council discussed the agreement with the Central Valley Cable Commission for local access programming services. The Council agreed that, prior to making a decision regarding the elimination of local access services, including the local access channels, there should be a test period during which the local access channels would be turned off and the cities would have an opportunity to see if they received feedback from residents regarding the loss of the access channels. The Council also agreed that the participating cities should continue to pay the current fees to the Central Valley Cable Commission for the local access services during the test period.

The Council approved a one-year contract with StarTech for I.T. services

The Council approved the purchase of microphones and related equipment for the Council Chambers to improve the sound quality of City Council meetings. The Council also approved the replacement of the current projector with either an upgraded projector or a large screen TV.

The Council approved a policy to clarify that the role of Council members on City Committees and Commissions whose members are all or mostly non-Council members should be a liaison role, in which the Council member can serve as a resource and respond to questions from the commission members, but does not have voting rights and does not serve as chair.

The Council authorized the City Administrator to move forward with the hiring of the Personnel Committee’s top candidate for the City Clerk position, after discussions with those Council members who want to review the applications of the top three candidates.

The Council scheduled a joint meeting with the Planning Commission, to discuss work planning for 2017, for Monday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m.

The Council scheduled a work session for 1:30 p.m. on Monday, March 6 to discuss the Downtown Village Improvements Project and to begin the goal setting process for 2017.

The Council scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday, April 18 at 7:00 p.m. regarding Mn/DOT’s planned improvement project on Highway 95/Manning Avenue south of County Road 18

The Council approved scheduling a joint work session with the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee, to discuss work planning for 2017, for 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4.

The Council adopted a resolution transferring the \$265,000 2016 General Fund Surplus to other Funds as follows: \$10,000 to the Special Reserve Fund, \$25,000 to the Land and Buildings Capital Fund for a joint project with the Washington County Sheriff’s Department to construct a small office and garage adjacent to the Afton City Hall for the Sheriff’s Deputies who serve Afton and the Lower St. Croix Valley area, and the remaining \$230,000 to the Street Improvements Capital Fund.



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



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## Valley Branch Library MARCH 2017 EVENTS

### D.I.Y. Room Decor

Thursday, March 2, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Kids will design and create funky handmade room decor using various visual art disciplines. Register online, at the library, or call 651-436-5882.

### STEM Saturday:

Saturday, March 18, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Frogs, Volts, and Vinegar with the Bakken Museum

### STEAM Storytime

Monday, March 27, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

### Children's Events -

#### Family Storytime

Mondays, March 6, 13, 20, 27, from 10:30 to 11 a.m.

Join us for stories, songs, fingerplays, and more to encourage the development of early literacy skills.

For all children and their families.

### Book Club -

#### Valley Library Book Club

Thursday, March 23, from 5 to 5:55 p.m.

The group that gathers will discuss the book "Ender's Game" by Orson Scott Card. Visit Valley Library to pick up a copy of the book. Just read the book, come, and discuss. Open to all.

**PATRON  
AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter

**IN COLOR**  
on the city website.



*Please recycle this  
newsletter after use.*

## Getting Ready for Spring: Rinta Community Garden

Spring will be here soon; time for gardeners to get their hands dirty. The Rinta Community Garden has 20 plots available to residents of the Lower St. Croix Valley.

There is no charge for using a plot. Gardeners are asked not to use pesticides and to use organic fertilizers. There is no well water at the site, but 2 rain barrels collecting runoff from a small shed will hold 110 gallons of water for irrigation when necessary. The installation of a high fence last summer has thwarted hungry deer.

If you are interested in a garden plot at Rinta, contact Afton City Hall or go to the Afton website for an application. Complete and return it to Afton City Hall, 3033 St. Croix Trail, P.O. Box 219, Afton, MN 55001.

If you have additional questions, contact Barbara Ronningen at [bjronningen@yahoo.com](mailto:bjronningen@yahoo.com).

## March 31st is the Deadline

The City of Afton requires pets to be licensed and have current rabies vaccinations on file. **Pet License LATE FEE is in effect APRIL 1, 2017. The late fee is an additional \$5.00 per pet .**