



**March 2022**

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

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

The City of Afton has a great staff that manages the numerous aspects of the day-to-day activities of the city. One of the many tasks they manage is the increased demand for building related permits and inspections for both new and renovation home projects. Here is a snapshot of the totals over the last three years.

2019

Total Building Permits: 237  
New Construction: 9

2020

Total Building Permits: 250  
New Construction: 10

2021

Total Building Permits: 273  
New Construction: 17

2021 Total Homes in Afton: 1,490

2020 Total Homes sold in Afton: 31

2020 Total Population of Afton: 2,955

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**CITY MEETINGS**

**March 3, 2022**

Ag Preservation Committee Meeting  
7:00 P.M. (In-Person)

**March 7, 2022**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 P.M. (In-Person)

**March 15, 2022**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M. (In-Person)

**March 23, 2022**

Parks Committee Meeting  
6:00 P.M. (In-Person)

[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](http://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**

**Don't forget Daylight Savings!**  
"Spring forward" one hour on March 13th



## Notes from the Mayor

Over the next year, our planning commission plans to look at groundwater issues and what we might do here to help ensure the long-term protection of a resource we all rely upon. Obviously, this is a regional issue, but ensuring we are doing what we can here in the city, and understanding what policies and practices we should advocate for with our county and state partners, will be invaluable. Afton is fortunate to have a great group of commissioners who are forward-looking and willing to take on this type of project.

Speaking of our great volunteer groups, the agriculture preservation committee continues to meet and has laid out a plan to guide their work. They continue to analyze and develop solutions for the issues a city like ours deals with as it works to maintain a balance of land uses that includes a vital and secure farm sector. The agendas and minutes are available on our website if you would like to follow along with their work and progress.

As you are probably aware, the courts released new district maps for the state offices. There were changes that will impact Afton. We will no longer be in house district 54B where Rep. Jurgens has represented us for the last six years. We will now be in senate district 41 and house district 41a. Rep. Jurgens worked with the city on many issues over the years and helped us secure funding for additional flood mitigation efforts in 2020. Our state senator, Karla Bigham, announced that she will not be seeking a new term. Sen. Bigham has always been available and responsive to the needs of small cities and worked to help us on many issues over the years. I want to thank them both for their efforts on our behalf during their time representing Afton.

This redistricting process also involves Afton reviewing its city council ward maps this spring to see if any changes are required. That process will be completed in March.

The Afton Historical Society announced that it has been awarded two significant grants from the State of Minnesota through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (Legacy Grants). One will provide funding to restore and preserve its 100+ year-old mural above the main level stage that is in serious disrepair. The other grant funds a non-water-based 3M Fire Suppression System in the artifact storage room. These grants will go far to preserve the historical heritage of our city. Congratulations to all involved in obtaining those funds.

Lastly, it was great to see all the signs around the city supporting Afton native Jessie Diggins. If this was indeed her last Olympics, she represented our country in an incredible way at these games. Finishing among the top skiers in every event, winning the first individual medal for a U.S. skier, and then the first medal for a non-European skier in the 30k race. What an amazing performance!

-Bill

### Have an Interest in Historical Architecture?

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

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.

### 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 250 gallons of water for irrigation when necessary. The installation of a high fence 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 (Located under "Parks, Park Reservations & Special Events"). 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).

## Meeting Highlights

### February 7, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting

#### The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit application for wireless antennas at 12501 Hudson Rd S. The commission recommended tabling the application to allow time for the applicant and landowner to discuss the proposal.
- Held a public hearing for an application for vacation of drainage & utility easements in lots 4 & 5 of the Afton Business Park. The commission recommended approval.
- Held a public hearing for a Variance at 14740 Valley Creek Trail S. The commission recommended approval.
- Held a discussion on possible groundwater supply protection/conservation measures.

### February 15, 2022 City Council Meeting

#### The Council:

- Approved an application for vacation of drainage & utility easements in lots 4 & 5 of the Afton Business Park.
- Approved an application for a Variance at 14740 Valley Creek Trail S.
- Approved the 2022 Liquor License for the Lumberyard Pub.
- Approved an extension to a variance at 4102 River Road.
- Approved an extension of contract with Stensland Inspection Services for building inspection services.
- Re-appointed two members of the planning commission who's terms were expiring.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

## Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

**Saturday, March 5**  
**10:00—11:30 AM**

### Winter Ecology with Jim Rue

Hike the trails of Belwin Conservancy and examine the different strategies organisms use to survive the cold. This class is presented in partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools Community Education and led by Belwin Naturalist Jim Rue. Dress to be outdoors, wear comfortable winter hiking shoes/boots. Register via SPPS Community Education.

**Friday, March 18**  
**Saturday, March 19**  
**6:00—9:00 PM**

### Women Walking

Join us to 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 indoors for a welcome and some easy centering exercises. 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. Wear comfortable layers and be prepared for any weather.

Led by Lynette Anderson. Open to all women age 16 and older. (Permission from a guardian is required for those 16-17 years of age.) Maximum of 20, minimum of 6. Cost is \$20 per person. RSVP and prepay required. No dogs allowed at this or any Belwin event.

**Belwin Conservancy**  
**1553 Stagecoach Trail South**  
**Afton MN 55001**  
**651-436-5189**  
[www.belwin.org](http://www.belwin.org)

## 2022 Shredding Events at the Environmental Center

Washington County offers free paper shredding events for confidential papers at the Environment Center. Documents will be shredded on-site by Shred Right and recycled. CDs, floppy disks, and other media will be accepted for off-site destruction. These events are free and open to residents and businesses.

Wednesdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.:

- April 20
- May 25
- June 22
- Aug. 3
- Sept. 28
- Nov. 9

<https://www.co.washington.mn.us/3031/Shredding-Events>

Washington County Environmental Center  
4039 Cottage Grove Drive  
Woodbury, MN 55129  
651-275-7475





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

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## Valley Library

### Rediscover Valley Library

Valley Library is open! If you haven't been to the library in a while, now is a great time to stop by Lakeland Village (384 St Croix Trail S, Lakeland) to browse new materials, use a computer or meeting room, and participate in free library programs for all ages.

### Library Hours

Visit the library on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Masks are currently required for all visitors over the age of two, regardless of vaccination status.

### Upcoming Events

Family Storytimes are available every Monday at 10:30 a.m. Develop early literacy skills with stories, songs, fingerplays, and more! For children of all ages and their families.

Valley Book Club meets in person on the fourth Thursday of each month from 5-6 p.m. to discuss a selected title. This book club is free and open to all.

A variety of Take and Make Activities are available for free each month. Visit the library to pick up all the supplies you need to complete a fun craft at home.

Learn more about all Valley Library programs at [WashCoLib.org/Events](http://WashCoLib.org/Events).

Check the library website for information on reading activities, library programs, and current hours.

### Valley Branch Library

384 St Croix Trail S  
Lakeland, MN 55043  
651-436-5882  
[www.washcolib.org](http://www.washcolib.org)

**PATRON**  
**AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter  
**IN COLOR**  
on the city website.



*Please recycle this  
newsletter after use.*

## Washington County Sheriff's Office

Did you know that you can text 9-1-1 if you are unable to make an emergency call?

This technology first became available in Minnesota in 2017, and recently, the Washington County Emergency Communications center went live with the service. We extend our thanks to the [Chisago County Sheriff's Office](#) for previously relaying our texts requests.

Roughly 1% of 9-1-1 calls are text-to-911 in Minnesota. Text-to-911 can be used if you are unable to speak, you must remain quiet to stay safe, or if speaking may cause harm. This is also the first contact option for people with some form of hearing loss or have a speech impairment.

Remember, dispatchers prefer to speak with you whenever possible. Texts are for emergencies only when calls are not possible.

### How to Text 911:

1. Enter the numbers 911 in the "To" field
2. Include your location and type of emergency
3. "Send" message
4. Answer questions and follow instructions
5. Use simple words - no abbreviations!

Texting 911 with a false report is a crime. If you accidentally send a text to 911, send another text or call 911 to let the dispatcher know there is no emergency.