



April 2022

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



**Grab your Glitter for the Jessie Diggins ‘Welcome Home’
Celebration on Saturday, April 2.**

**Join us as the Community comes together to throw a party to honor
Afton’s ‘Hometown Hero’**

All that Glitters... is Jessie Diggins. **Olympian Jessie Diggins** will be returning home to Afton, and the community will welcome her back in a big way. Jessie’s amazing performance in the 2022 Winter Olympics secured a Silver medal in the Women’s Freestyle, and a Bronze medal in the Women’s Sprint.

The public is invited to join the celebration on Saturday, April 2 from Noon-5PM. Jessie will arrive at 1 pm. The day will include brief remarks by Jessie, but primarily she will be on hand to say hello, pose for photos, and show off her Olympic medals and World Cup Trophies.

There will be glitter (of course), posters and t-shirts, and Jessie’s autobiography Brave Enough will be for sale. Other activities include raffle items and goodies from Salomon and other donors. Channel your inner athlete, as this event is rain or shine. Parking is limited, so please carpool.

Additional Details:

- Saturday, April 2, Noon – 5:00. Jessie arrives at 1 pm, when the program begins. It is highly recommended that fans arrive at Noon.
- Event location is Town Square Park in Afton.
- Food and refreshments will be available from food trucks and local restaurants, and Selma’s Ice Cream Parlor will be selling commemorative sundaes with edible glitter sprinkles.
- Huge, heated tent to keep everyone warm and dry.
- St. Croix Trail in the village will be closed to through traffic during the event. A soft closure will be at the north and south end of the village to allow for parking and a hard closure at Town Square Park.

This event is organized by the Afton Parade Committee with help from the City of Afton and important cooperation by Washington County, as well as generous financial support by Salomon and Allianz.

Questions – email stan@aftonparade.com

Stan Ross



CITY MEETINGS

April 4, 2022

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

April 7, 2022

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

April 19, 2022

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

April 27, 2022

Parks Committee Meeting
6:00 P.M.

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

EMERGENCY 911

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

◆ **Comcast cable and internet build out**

The council approved a proposal from Comcast to build out cable TV and Internet service in four areas of Afton that are underserved for internet access. The proposal involves the use of \$50,000 of the City’s federal ARPA grant funds, and is subject to a matching grant from Washington County. The Comcast quote to complete this project is \$375,000 and Comcast will cover all but \$100,000. Washington County has indicated there is a high likelihood they could contribute \$50,000 from their ARPA funds through their Broadband Expansion Program.

Continued on Page 2...

Notes from the Mayor

If you are like me, you might have had a bit of a shock when you opened your 2022 property valuation from the county in March. This is the value on which taxes we will pay in 2023 will be based. Residential real estate values have risen sharply, in some cases 25% year over year. These increases appear to be across the board for most residential properties including across Washington County and other metro counties, and also appear to be market-driven increases. There are a couple of things to remember about these valuations. One is that on their own they do not always lead to higher taxes. In a community like Afton, residential real estate makes up most of our tax base. Therefore, if all of our property values go up about the same percentage, even considerably, one's actual share of the city tax base should remain pretty much the same year over year. This would mean that City taxes on residential property would increase approximately at the same percentage as the City's annual tax levy increase, which was 2.8% for 2022. However, a significant part of each person's property tax total relates to tax levies from other taxing authorities such as the county. The ultimate impact to the actual taxes we pay will depend on how the valuations on all other property types, such as commercial or industrial property in those taxing districts, changed relative to the residential property valuation increases for 2022.

If your valuation seems out of line with what your property would list for should you decide to sell, you have the right to appeal that valuation this spring. The county has listed the open book meeting times and places on your valuation notice as well as their contact information. You must start at the local open book meeting to preserve your right to appeal to the county board of appeal and equalization and tax court if you are not satisfied with the results of any appeal at the local level. The County Assessor suggests that residents call an appraiser in the County Assessor's Office prior to the open book meeting to enable a discussion and sharing of information regarding the property valuation. If an agreement regarding the property value cannot be reached with the County appraiser, the resident can then go directly to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization hearing without going to the open book meeting. Those planning to attend the County Board of Appeal and Equalization hearing are encouraged to schedule an appointment prior to May 4 through Jessica Arneson in the County Assessor's Office at 651-430-6097.

To access a broad range of property valuation information, the following is a link to the County Assessor's website: <https://washington.minnesotaassessors.com/> Click "maps" to do a real estate search including property values for neighboring properties.

In other news, I am happy to say the online bill payment system is up and running on the city's website. You can now pay for building permits (and the monthly sewer service bill for those in the Old Village) online.

As was mentioned on the newsletter cover, Saturday, April 2, is Jessie Diggins Day. I hope you can come to Afton Town Square Park to celebrate all of Jessie's accomplishments. Among all her achievements in this last Olympics, I think the one that stands out the most did not involve the medals she won. In our "Jessie Diggins Day" resolution we noted that Jessie finished in the top 8 in every cross country event held at these Olympic games. No athlete had ever accomplished that in the sport. To be among the best in the world in every event is amazing and shows that she is one of the greatest all-around athletes to ever represent the United States.

-Bill

Dashboard Continued from page 1....

Assuming the County approves their funding match, the project would start in the late spring of this year.

The proposed areas for the build out are:

- Valley Creek - east end
- Trading Post, north of 40th to 30th
- Ozark Ave & Oxbow
- Quadrant, 53rd Street and Swede Hill

The city has not been made aware of the cable routing to these specific areas at the time of this newsletter. We have been told that once the cable has been installed all residents along the cable routing are eligible to connect.

If you have questions, please email Stan Ross at ward3@ci.afton.mn.us

◆ **Ward Boundary changes**

As reflected in the 2020 census, a population shift within Afton has occurred. Ward 2 has experienced a population increase of 74 and Ward 1 has experienced a decrease of 44 residents. In order to rebalance the population across the four wards, the council approved a modification in the Ward boundaries shifting 56 residents from Ward 2 to Ward 1. These residents are located in the area bounded by 50th Street on the north, Odell Avenue on the west, and Trading Post Trail and Osgood Avenue on the east. The polling place for all wards will remain Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 14107 Hudson Road.

SAR

Meeting Highlights

March 7, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting

The March Planning Commission meeting was canceled due to lack of a quorum.

March 15, 2022 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Approved a speed limit signage plan for River Road.
- Declared a Proclamation celebrating Jessie Diggins.
- Approved minor revisions to the City Council Election Ward boundaries.
- Approved a proposal for an internet upgrade project for underserved areas of the city.
- Approved annual pay adjustments for city staff and council members.

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

City of Afton is Hiring Seasonal Part-Time Public Works Maintenance

- Starting pay rate: \$15.00 to \$15.50 per hour, depending on level of experience.
- Work Schedule: Approximately 15-20 hours per week; Some weekend hours.
- Duties: Responsible for general public works and parks maintenance, as well as cleaning and routine maintenance of all areas of the Afton City Hall.
- Qualifications: Experience operating lawn tractors, chain-saws and weed whips.
- Must be a high school graduate or equivalent and possess a valid driver's license with satisfactory driving record.
- Must be 18 years of age or older and able to frequently lift/move 50 pounds.

An application is available at the City Hall or online at www.ci.afton.mn.us.

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

**BELWIN BISON FESTIVAL
RETURNS SATURDAY, MAY 21**
Community event will feature Bison Release, 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run, Interactive Eco-arts, Live Music, and Food Trucks

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, Belwin Conservancy is once again inviting the public to welcome a herd of juvenile male bison to their summer home.

The 2022 Belwin Bison Festival will be held on Saturday, May 21, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, and includes previous-year crowd favorites like the bison release and 5k "Run with the Bison" fun trail run, food trucks, and an activity tent featuring live music and interactive eco-arts.

Performing artists include the Riddle Brothers, and Sarah Greer and Dean Magraw

Everyone is invited to attend this family-friendly festival, taking place at Belwin's Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields (15601 Hudson Road, West Lakeland, Minnesota).

\$10 per car. Pay as you drive in. No RSVP required. No dogs allowed at this or any Belwin event.

Event Details: belwin.org/event/belwin-bison-festival/

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

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.

Rinta Community Garden

Several plots are still available at the Rinta Community Garden for the 2022 gardening season. 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.



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

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.

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

PATRON
AFTON, MN 55001

Brush & Yard Waste

Aggregate Industries has **CLOSED** the Brush Pit.

The following options are available to residents who have brush or yard waste to dispose of.

- Gertens in Denmark Township accepts brush and yard waste for a small fee. Contact: <https://www.gertens.com/atgertens/yard-waste.htm> (651) 458-4412
- This local company will pick up brush from your residence: CroixCavating (651) 436-5222
- Washington County operates the Northern Yard Waste Site which is free for residents of Washington County:
Northern Yard Waste Site
5527 170th St. N.
Hugo, MN 55038
(651) 275-7475

METAL & TIRE RECYCLING DAY

Mark your calendars ~ Metal and Tire Recycling Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 4, 2022 at the City Garage, 1675 Stagecoach Trail. 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Watch your May Newsletter for more details.

Online payments are now available for Building Permits and Sewer Payments.

www.ci.afton.mn.us

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



*Please recycle this
newsletter after use.*

Afton honors Earth Day 2022 with Roadside Clean-up

Residents are encouraged to pick up debris from ditches, roadsides and park areas. Coordinate with neighbors along streets or just pick up the trash along your own property frontage. Roadside "finds" and trash should be placed at the nearest street intersection for pickup by Highland Sanitation trucks on your regular trash day: **Tuesday, April 19 or Thursday, April 21.**

You can use your own plastic trash bags to bag your roadside finds. Wear sturdy gloves, long sleeves and tuck pants into socks or waterproof boots to avoid wet feet, getting scratches and attracting ticks. Rakes or long-handled "grabbers" minimize stooping over or having to crawl under bushes.

Recyclable items can be brought back to your home and placed out with your residential recycling can— there is no limit on residential recycling.

Any large items found along the roadsides or in the ditches should be reported to the City Hall at 436-5090.

All participation and efforts in protecting Afton's appearance and environment are greatly appreciated. Thank you!

