



**May 2022**

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

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

- ◆ A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) was approved to add an additional antenna array to an existing tower in the Industrial zone (along I-94).
- ◆ A CUP was approved for the operation of a farm winery at an existing orchard located at 14698 Afton Blvd South. The CUP does not involve any change in the activities on the property and no sales, tastings, or other commercial activities are permitted. The parcel was also rezoned from Rural Residential to Agricultural.
- ◆ A CUP was approved for the new owners of the former Squire House Gardens to allow small gatherings and other permitted uses when the store is reopened in May.
- ◆ As part of its ongoing policy to review contracted services on a regular basis, the city approved a Request for Proposals (RFP) for legal services. The RFPs will be reviewed over the next month.
- ◆ The Valley Creek bridge and nearby culvert replacement near 14041 Valley Creek Trail South is scheduled to start soon. Road closures will be announced.
- ◆ Phase 2 of last year's Wildlife Crossing project at the underpass of Co. Rd. 18 and Valley Creek was approved by the council. This phase will install the north pathway which will complete the project. According to the DNR's biologist, the phase 1 crossing installed last year had immediate use by the local wildlife. Thanks to the great support from the county, a majority of the expense will be covered for this project, with the balance being paid by the city.
- ◆ A reminder that property owners in the Old Village that are located within the city's sewer system service area need to complete their hookup no later than December 2024. This leaves three construction seasons remaining; and based on material lead times, ongoing labor shortages, contractor backlogs, and cost increases, it may be worthwhile scheduling your hookup now.

Note: If a property is not hooked up to the sanitary sewer system by December 31, 2024, the property owners will be in violation of the zoning code which could result in ongoing fines until the connection is made.

Properties located in the service area that are sold or otherwise transferred to new owners prior to December of 2024 are required to complete the hookup at that time.

- ⇒ Total number of residential properties the sewer system will serve is 78.
- ⇒ Total number of commercial properties the sewer system will serve is 20.
- ⇒ Total number of residents that have connected is 37.
- ⇒ Total number of businesses that have connected is 6.
- ⇒ Everyone that is, or will be, served by the sewer system has been assessed for their share of the project cost.

-SAR

**CITY MEETINGS**

**May 2, 2022**

Planning Commission Meeting  
6:30 P.M. (In-Person)

**May 12, 2022**

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

**May 17, 2022**

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

**May 25, 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**

## Notes from the Mayor

The Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Department held their annual appreciation dinner for the first time in over two years in April. It was a great event that acknowledged the incredible dedication and service these volunteer fire fighters provide to our community. Several members from Afton were honored for service milestones: Kevin Johnson for 35 years of service, Chip Hannigan for 30 years of service, and Simon Wirth for 5 years of service. Thank you Kevin, Chip, and Simon, and all the members of the department, for your work. I think over these last few years, especially the early days of the pandemic when there was so much uncertainty, many in our community felt a vulnerability they had not experienced before. But no matter what was happening in the world, when our community called, the fire department arrived. I know that for those who had to make that call, it is something they continue to be grateful for.

In other news, I have heard of several local cities in the metro area that are exploring *No Mow May* this year. It is an idea that I would like to suggest to people who have the ability to participate. *No Mow May* is a conservation initiative that works to create habitat and food sources for early season native pollinators. In Minnesota, we have 455 species of native bees according to the most recent Department of Natural Resources survey. Many of these are solitary and nest in wood, plant stems, or the soil rather than building large communal hives. For these native bees, often the first blooming plants that they rely on can be found in areas that can be mowed. In Afton, the overall impact of a *No Mow May* will not be as dramatic as it would be in a more densely developed urban area, but with the declining population of pollinators it seems that anything we are able to do could be very beneficial.

The best part of *No Mow May* is that we know it works to help these native species. In 2020, 435 residents of Appleton, Wisconsin participated and their efforts were tracked by researchers from Lawrence University. Participating yards had three-times higher bee species richness and five-times higher bee abundance than nearby city parks that had been mowed.

So if you are in a position to let the early blooming plants grow in areas that you normally mow, or even just a part of an area that you mow, think about holding off in May and see if you experience the same results. If you do, please let me know. Maybe next year we can work on something more city-wide and official for those who wish to participate.

-Bill

### Afton Historical Museum

Over the past 10 years, the Afton Historical Museum has completed numerous important projects; updating the historic building which houses the museum, adding a fire suppression system, protecting the museum's artifacts, and updating the inventory system. This work has been done through a partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society and funded by their grant programs.

Most recently the museum was awarded a large grant from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society for the stabilization and restoration of the 100+ year old, 30-foot-long mural located on the main floor of the museum. Work began in early February and up till now all work has been done "behind the scenes" in the attic behind the mural, to stabilize the museum's structure.

Soon a group of highly skilled conservators from the Minneapolis based Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC) will commence work on the mural's surface, repairing the cracks and voids that have developed over the last 100 years and at the same time they will be cleaning the mural and touching up paint loss, restoring the mural to nearly its original condition.

As part of this project the museum is hosting an event on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM to see the conservation process up close. If you would like to attend, contact the museum at [info@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com](mailto:info@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com).

Stan  
President  
Afton Historical Museum  
3165 St. Croix Trail South  
PO Box 178  
Afton, MN 55001  
612-720-6478

### METAL & TIRE RECYCLING DAY

Metal and Tire Recycling Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 4, 2022 at the City Garage, 1675 Stagecoach Trail. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Residents must unload their own vehicles— come prepared to unload.

- SCRAP METAL includes swing sets, bicycles, metal toys, etc. (NO appliances are allowed.) All fabric, rubber, wood, fluids, and anything else that is *not* metal must be removed.
- TIRES must be off the rims (metal rims can be recycled). Tire size is limited to your ability to lift them. NO large tires such as tractor tires. This is for personal disposal only. NO commercial supplies of tires.)

PLEASE BE AWARE: THE CITY HAS THE RIGHT TO REFUSE NON-RESIDENTS, TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF TIRES, OR REFUSE CERTAIN METAL ITEMS.

*Please be patient and cooperate with staff by following their direction in lining up and unloading your metal items and tires.*

## Meeting Highlights

### April 4, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting

#### **The Commission:**

- Held a public hearing for a Variance application for a garage at 12770 4th St.
- Held a public hearing for a Rezoning application from Rural Residential to Agriculture at 14698 Afton Blvd.
- Held a public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit for a farm winery at 14698 Afton Blvd.
- Held a public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit to allow gatherings and events at 3390 St Croix Tr S.
- Reviewed draft Ordinance Amendment language to clarify the timeline for implementation of a variance.
- Reviewed an application for a Conditional Use Permit to add an antenna array to the existing tower at 12501 Hudson Rd.

### April 19, 2022 City Council Meeting

#### **The Council:**

- Approved a Variance application for a garage at 12770 4th St.
- Approved a Rezoning application from Rural Residential to Agriculture at 14698 Afton Blvd.
- Approved a Conditional Use Permit for a farm winery at 14698 Afton Blvd.
- Approved a Conditional Use Permit to allow small gatherings and events at 3390 St Croix Tr S.
- Approved an application for a Conditional Use Permit to add an antenna array to the existing tower at 12501 Hudson Rd.
- Approved replacement of the city's lawn tractor/snow blower.
- Approved the combination trash/recycling containers for Town Square Park, with the costs to be funded by Washington County.
- Approved phase 2 of the Safe Wildlife Crossing on St. Croix Trail at Valley Creek Bridge.

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

### We Belong to the Earth: The Transformation of After-Death Choices

Thursday, May 12, 2022

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Free

*In partnership with the Land Conservation Natural Burial Project*

### Evening Wetland Walk

Saturday May 14, 2022

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

\$25

*In partnership with St. Paul Community Education*

### Be a Better Birder

Sunday, May 15, 2022

8:30 am – 10:30 am

\$25

*In partnership with St. Paul Community Education*

### Belwin Bison Festival

Saturday, May 21, 2022

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Belwin's Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields,  
15601 Hudson Road N., Lakeland, MN 55082  
\$10/car

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

## Mosquito Control Activity

Metropolitan Mosquito Control District trucks, helicopters, and staff will be out in neighborhoods and parks this spring and summer working to reduce mosquito-borne disease and annoyance. Every spring after the snow melts and as temperatures rise, we begin to find mosquito larvae in ponds and wetlands around the Twin Cities. The Metropolitan Mosquito Control District (MMCD) will be conducting surveillance and treatment activities in your community to reduce the risk of disease and annoyance in an environmentally-sensitive manner.

Each year the field staff at MMCD monitors and treats wetlands that breed mosquitoes with a fleet of trucks and helicopters. Many of our seasonal staff begin working in April and residents of the seven county metro area may notice the green or white trucks with the MMCD logo or staff on bikes or on foot wearing brightly colored "Mosquito Control" shirts. At times MMCD employees may need to cross private property for access to check and treat areas for mosquito larvae. MMCD management asks the community to please stay several feet away from field staff and ensure children and pets are kept at a distance.

If you have questions about mosquito control activities or concerns about an employee, please call the MMCD front desk at (651) 645-9149 or visit [MMCD.org](http://MMCD.org).

## Controlled burns planned in Washington County parks

Washington County is planning to conduct controlled burns throughout the park system April through November, with most burns occurring in May. Burns are planned at Big Marine Park Reserve, Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, Pine Point Regional Park, Square Lake Park and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.

Controlled burns help keep grasslands and forests healthy, by removing accumulated fuel, which increases nutrient cycling, sets back shrubs and trees, encourages regeneration of oaks, increases plant structure and diversity, and reduces pestilence. Many plant communities have wildlife that need this type of disturbance to be sustained, as they were for generations by indigenous people of the area.

All burns are planned with the assistance of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division by obtaining a burn variance during burn restrictions and local fire departments. The burns will occur primarily during the day when weather conditions permit a safe and effective burn. Trained personnel with fire-fighting equipment are on-site until the fire is extinguished. For additional information, call the Washington County Natural Resources Coordinator at 651-430-4323.



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.

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**

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

[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

You may view this newsletter

**IN COLOR**  
on the city website.



*Please recycle this newsletter after use.*

### 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 for a fee: CroixCavating (651) 302-2219
- 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

Afton-Lakeland Elementary  
**CARNIVAL**  
MAY 7TH, 10:30AM-2:30PM  
SPONSORED BY THE A-L PTA

★ AUCTION-FOOD- PUNCH CARDS  
★ GAMES-RAFFLE- \$20 FOR 40  
★ INFLATABLES- PUNCHES-  
★ BALLOON ARTIST- ACTIVITIES  
★ FACEPAINT- RANGE 1-7  
★ COMMUNITY @AftonLakeland PUNCHES

**SO MUCH FUN!**

### HWY I-94 CONSTRUCTION

**Virtual public meeting for Hwy I-94 from Century Ave. to St. Croix River Construction Project set for May 12.**

Join us for a virtual public meeting to see the construction overview, impacts and schedule, as well as what to expect in 2022. A short presentation will begin promptly at 4:30 p.m. followed by a question-and-answer session with the project team. Register on the project webpage: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i94oakdale-stcroix/>

#### Unable to attend the public meeting?

A video recording of the presentation will be available on the project webpage the week of May 16.