



**July 2021**

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

### CITY MEETINGS

*City Offices Closed July 5th  
in observance of Independence Day*

#### **July 20, 2021**

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

#### **August 2, 2021**

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

Public Participation Via Zoom Will Continue  
to be Available.

Information on how to join the meetings will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.

### CITY COUNCIL

<u>Mayor:</u> Bill Palmquist	651-308-0569
<u>Ward 1:</u> Annie Perkins	651-592-3007
<u>Ward 2:</u> Lucia Wroblewski	651-436-3982
<u>Ward 3:</u> Stan Ross	612-720-6478
<u>Ward 4:</u> 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**

### **The 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade has been cancelled**

The Afton Parade Committee starts planning very early in the year with booking entertainment, police, volunteers, vendors, and fund raising. At that time it was indeterminate whether COVID restrictions would still apply by the 4<sup>th</sup>. In order to raise the roughly \$10,000—\$15,000 needed to run the parade, the committee felt it improper to ask already financially stressed businesses to donate.

**- Afton Parade Committee**

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

- ◆ Public Works recently discovered a very disturbing and cowardly act of tree sabotage located on the steep slope between Pennington Ave. and Town Square Park in the Old Village. Someone made a deep (girdling) cut around the entire circumference of ten to twelve very large, tall trees with the intent of slowly killing them. The trees are located on public property and, therefore, their removal falls on the City at a cost of \$40,000 - \$60,000 of your tax dollars. If found, the City intends on charging the person or persons with felony destruction of property. The Washington County Sheriff is investigating and if you have any information on this matter please call the City or 911. Your name is confidential.
- ◆ You are the eyes and ears of the city. If you witness an ordinance violation please report it to the city ASAP. Your name is confidential and reporting will help our community.
- ◆ The council approved two Conditional Use Permits for solar arrays located in the new Afton Business Park located at Manning and the frontage road.
- ◆ A request by a third solar company for a variance required to install another solar array in the Afton Business Park was denied and the CUP was tabled to allow the applicant time to determine if there was a way to continue without the variance.
- ◆ Why all the interest in Afton for solar arrays in this area? Mainly due to the close proximity to the power company’s sub-station located just north of the frontage road, and the fact that large solar arrays are limited to the Industrial Zone which is located at the Afton Business Park and the area north of the frontage road.
- ◆ 60<sup>th</sup> street has been paved from Trading Post Trail to Neal and was paid for by the developer of the Afton Creek Preserve.
- ◆ The home owner who clear cut the trees on his Lake Edith property is being arraigned on criminal charges in early July.

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## *Notes from the Mayor*

As most of you know the 4th of July parade was cancelled again this year. I have gotten a few calls about this and wanted to let everyone know what happened and how that decision was made. The non-profit that puts on the parade has to raise over \$10,000 a year to hold the event. Most of that fundraising is done in January and February. Due to the uncertainty which remained about the pandemic during that time no fundraising was able to be done. Subsequently, none of the many necessary logistics from the county, the sheriff, transportation, and everything else that goes into it was secured. It is unfortunate, but I am optimistic next year's parade will be back and better than ever. The parade committee is always looking for volunteers to help, either with the planning, fundraising, or especially helping the day of the parade. As we all realize how much we enjoy having such a great event here in Afton, I hope some of you will consider helping out next year to ensure we continue to have a safe and successful event.

We will be returning to in-person council meetings in July. Originally, we had set a June date, but due to some technical and staffing issues we decided to move it to July. We also stopped the emergency resolution at last month's meeting. I want to thank the council for the trust they put in me by renewing it over these many months "just in case." But I am happy to have that part of this ordeal behind us.

The city had two unfortunate incidents recently, both in the Old Village area. As was noted on the front page, staff inspecting a storm water drainage system between the bluff and St. Croix Trail staff found many large trees that had been "girdled." This is not only illegal, but it could also have resulted in a serious safety issue. This issue is being investigated.

The second event was the use of a leg hold trap that caught a domestic cat. I will avoid the details of what happened to this poor animal but suffice to say the trap was set in the small-lot residential and commercial area of our city. Besides being in an area completely unsuited for trapping of any kind, the trap was not properly secured as all ethical trappers would do. Several years ago, the city created a trapping ordinance that requires trappers to get permission from landowners before setting traps on private property. Prior to that change, it was legal for a trapline to be set on private property without the knowledge or permission of the landowner. That ordinance will be reviewed to see what changes might be necessary to prevent a similar event.

On a brighter note, I am thrilled to see people returning to our businesses, out at our parks, and overall returning to some semblance of normalcy. I was happy to read the announcement that our own Afton Historical Museum will once again be opening up to the public. Be sure to visit them to see the marvelous work they do, and support them, and all our businesses and non-profits as they slowly begin to recover.

I hope you have a happy 4th of July holiday. Please remember our friends and neighbors and pets who can have trouble with the loud explosions this time of the year. Everyone I talk to expects fireworks on the 4th. It is the weeks before and after that can be hard for them so please be respectful of your neighbors.

-Bill

### **County Spot Mowing & Spraying for Noxious Weeds**

Washington County staff will be spot mowing and spraying for noxious weeds in the more than 220 miles of rural roadsides June 15 through July 30, and again in October. This is being done to help comply with Minnesota State Noxious Weed law administered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Mowing will be used to prevent seed set and the following herbicides will be used to spray mowed area: Escort XP, Milestone VM, and Liberate.

Property owners who do not want their roadside sprayed or mowed, and are willing to take responsibility for controlling and eradicating noxious weeds on the adjacent roadside, may visit the Washington County North Shop at 11660 Myeron Road in Stillwater Township to obtain signage, or call 651-430-4300. Be prepared to provide an address, the nearest cross street, and a description of where Do Not Spray signs will be located.

## Meeting Highlights

### June 7, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting

#### **The Commission:**

- Held a public hearing for a variance request for a lot line rearrangement at 13852 50th St. S.
- Held a public hearing for a variance request for a solar farm located in the Afton Business Park at Manning Ave and Hudson Road.
- Held public hearings for three solar farm CUP applications located in the Afton Business Park at Manning Ave and Hudson Road.

### June 15, 2021 City Council Meeting

#### **The Council:**

- Approved a variance request for a lot line rearrangement at 13852 50th St. S.
- Tabled a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application for one solar farm located in the Afton Business Park.
- Approved the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) applications for two solar farms in the Afton Business Park.
- Heard a presentation by the Youth Service Bureau.
- Accepted the 2020 Audit report.
- Authorized a working group to revise the current noise ordinance relating to loud vehicles.
- Approved purchase of battery operated power tools for Public Works.

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

### **Saturdays July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 2021**

Summer Saturdays at the Education Center  
8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Venture through woodland, prairie and wetlands on 4 miles of trails at the Belwin Education Center. Face masks are required to enter the building, which will be open for check in, directions and restrooms.

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

### **Dashboard Continued.....**

- ◆ The home owner located on 2<sup>nd</sup> street with an excessive amount of junk and clutter in their yard is being served with a court order for cleanup. They will then have 20 days to remove the junk. If they do not comply, the City will hire a company to clean up the yard and the cost will be assessed against the property.
- ◆ In a move to help reduce exhaust and noise pollution, the council voted to replace all of its two cycle tools (chain saws, blowers, weed whips, etc.) with Stihl battery operated tools. With the advances in battery technology these tools are shown to be just as powerful as their gas powered counter parts.
- ◆ The council has given the go ahead to form a working group to revise our noise ordinance to crack down on loud vehicles. The committee will work with the Sherriff's Office and the City Attorney to strengthen the ordinance allowing deputies to better enforce the rules.
- ◆ The county has assigned one of their engineers to start the DNR permitting process to move forward with the installation of the critter crossing along the creek under Co. Rd. 18 north of the village. This area of roadway has a very high kill rate of deer, turtles and other creatures' crossing over the road instead of through the underpass. The area under the bridge is covered with large rip-rap which makes it very difficult for the creatures to traverse. The county regularly creates critter friendly crossings under all new construction located near water.
- ◆ The 2021 paving project is complete and came in under budget.
- ◆ The council will return to 'in person' meetings at its July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting at the newly renovated council chambers. The Planning Commission will meet in person starting at its August meeting. Individuals are welcome to attend or join via live Zoom teleconference which will be displayed live on monitors at City Hall.

- SAR



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



PRSRT STD  
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AFTON MN 55001  
PERMIT NO. 15

### Valley Library

#### **Find Summer Events, Activities, and Storytimes at Valley Library**

Valley Library is offering a variety of indoor, outdoor, and virtual programs for all ages this summer! In accordance with state guidelines, masks are not required at the library but are encouraged for those who are not fully vaccinated.

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.*

### **Aggregate Industries has OPENED the Brush Pit. The Brush Day Schedule for the 2021 Season is as follows:**

June 26th  
July 17th  
August 14th  
September 18th  
October 16th

HOURS OF DUMPING ARE: 8 am - 10:50 am (THE GATE WILL BE SHUT AND LOCKED AT 11:00 AM).

Aggregate Industries only accepts brush, no commercial dumping.

Those who bring brush onto the site will need to stay in their vehicles, except when dumping at the designated dump site.

FOLLOW ALL SIGNS AND DIRECTIONS.

**16164 Hudson Blvd N  
Lakeland, MN 55043**



### **In-Person City Council Meetings to Resume in July**

The City Council will resume in-person Council meetings beginning with its July 20 regular meeting. The Planning Commission will resume in-person meetings beginning with its August 2 meeting. Residents can also participate in-person in the newly remodeled City Hall Council Chambers. All Covid 19-related capacity and distancing restrictions, as well as mask requirements, have been lifted.

Public Participation Via Zoom Will Continue to be Available. Although the Council and Planning Commission will be meeting in-person, public participation via Zoom will still be available. The zoom link will continue to be provided on the City Meeting Calendar and on the meeting agendas. Those participating in-person will be able to see and hear those participating via zoom through large screen TV's and speakers in the Council Chambers.