



August 2022

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

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

◆ **Well Water Testing Update**

The city received 111 requests for free water testing kits. This was a great response and we were able to distribute all the tests that were available for this cycle. The Natural Resources and Ground Water Committee (NRGC) tracks these results as they work to identify any trends in water quality within the city. If you registered and received a kit, please send copies of your results to Jenny at office-asst@ci.afton.mn.us so the results can be compiled by the NRGC committee and added to the historical data from prior years.

◆ **New Speed Limit on Oakgreen Avenue South of 15th Street**

Based on public feedback received during the public hearing regarding the hiking and mountain biking trail proposed at 2167 Oakgreen Avenue, and based on an analysis from the City Engineer, the Council approved a speed limit of 35 mph on this portion of Oakgreen Avenue and directed public works staff to install the speed limit signage. Other signage to identify limited visibility will also be added.

◆ **Addressing Vehicular Noise**

The Police Services Liaison Committee is working with the City's prosecuting attorney, the Washington County Sheriff's Patrol Sergeant, and the Washington County Special Enforcement Team (SET) to improve the city's noise ordinance. These changes will assist the deputies and prosecutors by making our restrictions related to excessive vehicle noise more readily enforceable.

-SAR

Mt. Hope Cemetery Restoration

Afton's Mt. Hope cemetery is located on one of the highest bluffs in the city. The cemetery is made up of a burial ground, where graves are marked with simple head and foot stones, and a Victorian era area with carved gravestones and fencing. Mt. Hope is the final resting place for several of Afton's earliest settlers.

Several years ago, the cemetery was listed as one of the 10 most threatened historical sites in the state. After that, the city contracted with the Afton Historical Museum to manage the restoration and preservation of the cemetery. This included reclaiming the area from the invasive vegetation that had overtaken the site, as well as finding grants and donations to restore the cemetery markers. The Museum has worked tirelessly to win the battle of the relentless growth of buckthorn and other invasive species.

In July, restoration was begun on the Victorian section of the cemetery. The Museum received a very generous donation from a family in the San Francisco Bay Area to start the work of restoring and preserving the numerous monuments located in the cemetery. The Museum hired Duluth based Northern Bedrock Historic Preservation Corporation to locate, reassemble, and clean the many headstones damaged over time. The crew of 8 to 10 people camped on site at the cemetery for a week. They were able to unearth several lost headstones and place them in their proper location. They also reassembled a number of spire shaped headstones broken over time. The crew did a great job and completed a large share of the restoration work needed at the cemetery.

CITY MEETINGS

August 1, 2022

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

August 2, 2022

Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee Meeting
5:00 P.M. (via Zoom)

August 16, 2022

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

August 24, 2022

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

August 29, 2022

September Planning Commission
Meeting
7:00 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

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

Notes from the Mayor

We received some good news in mid-July that our grant to increase high-speed internet service to the four underserved areas we had identified was approved. This project will be done in partnership with Comcast. They will also be expanding service into the Cedar Bluffs neighborhood off of Manning Avenue. We do not have detailed information on the routes they will use to extend the lines that will serve those four areas, but once that project is complete, the financial feasibility of extending service to residents along those routes should be improved. More on that to come.

Unfortunately, we also heard from the other company that I mentioned in the June newsletter that planned to bring another high-speed internet service option into Afton. They are no longer going to do that due to cost. This is very disappointing since staff questioned them in detail during the initial meetings on the costs to be sure they understood them, as we knew they would be very high. We were told the company had done that analysis and was prepared to move forward. We will continue to pursue any opportunities we can to increase options for residents.

At our July meeting, we had an agenda item to acknowledge and thank Scott Hawley and Holly Melroe for all their volunteer work maintaining the city's road medians and plantings in the Old Village. I have mentioned their work here before, but this was especially meaningful to me this time as the city staff asked that it be put on the agenda. Our staff is keenly aware of the time and effort it takes to keep our medians and areas around city hall looking as good as they do. In fact, City Administrator Moose mentioned that other cities have reached out to him to ask how we keep those medians looking so good. His answer, Scott and Holly! Thank you both!

As many of you know the old leaning Burr Oak tree in Town Square Park fell in July. It was a favorite of the kids since it seemed to defy gravity and its branches grew low and level at its base. The crews that removed it were able to save two long straight sections and Afton resident Brad Holz volunteered to attempt to mill those sections in the hopes we could use the wood to create a bench. Thank you Brad! He is also working to determine the age since we have heard some speculation that it was a Native American trail marking, or pointer tree, due to the way it had grown. These trees were bent when young to indicate a trail direction or to point to a certain important area. When we learn how old it was, we will have a better idea if that is a possibility.

Speaking of volunteers, a big thank you to Bob Dickie who cleaned and power washed the picnic shelter and gazebo in the park ahead of the work done to repair them. Both looked better just from that work. Thanks, Bob! Bill Baglio then did great repair and repainting work on both structures and both are much improved. Next time you are in the park take a look.

We also had several people step forward and volunteer for our committees. Jack Kollmer and Ann Dieperink joined the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee. Jill Livingston joined the Heritage Preservation Commission. Thank you all for volunteering to help the city!

I hope you saw the nice article in the *Pioneer Press* Sunday, July 24, about the positive activity happening in the commercial district of the Old Village. We have many new property owners who have some exciting plans in the works, and many of our existing owners have made major improvements. Next summer promises to be an exciting one. I hope you will support all of our businesses in the Old Village as we see this new energy and investment taking place.

-Bill

Afton Historical Museum Mural Restoration

In a joint effort, the City of Afton and the Afton Historical Museum applied for and received a grant of \$145,000 from the Minnesota Historical Society's Legacy Grant program for the restoration and preservation of the Museum's turn of the century hand-painted mural. The project started in February with structural repairs to the supporting wall which has persistently sagged over time causing significant cracking. Once this task was completed the Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC) was hired to secure the mural in place, clean off the 100 years of dirt, crack fill and in-paint the cracks. Several conservators from MACC spent many hours perched atop scaffolding in the Museum carefully and delicately cleaning and preserving the 30 foot by 8 foot mural. In addition, new high quality LED lighting was installed to show off the amazing results of all the hard work. The project will be completed by this fall at which time the Museum will be back to its old self welcoming all to visit.

Meeting Highlights

June 27, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Reviewed an application for a Conditional Use Permit at 1745 Neal Avenue to amend the Planned Agricultural Unit Development (PAUD) subdivision.
- Discussed groundwater protection measures.

July 19, 2022 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- The application for a Conditional Use Permit at 1745 Neal Avenue to amend the Planned Agricultural Unit Development (PAUD) subdivision was not approved.
- Approved a revised speed limit and signage plan on the Oakgreen Ave cul-de-sac south of 15th St.
- Appointed new members to the Natural Resources & Groundwater Committee.
- Appointed a new member to the Heritage Preservation Commission.
- Acknowledged the volunteer efforts of Scott Hawley and Holly Melroe for maintaining plantings at city hall and in the city's medians.

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

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Music in the Trees
 August 13 & 14, 2022
 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Amphibians and Reptiles of Minnesota
 August 20
 10:00 AM—11:30PM

4Ground: A Celebration of Valley Creek and David Sprecher Opening
 August 21
 2:00– 4:00 PM

Walk on the Wild Side: Native Prairie Plants
 August 24
 4:00—6:00 PM

For details on all events contact:

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

Primary Election August 9, 2022

For US Representative & State races

VOTE Absentee June 24—August 8

In Person Absentee and ballot drop off is available at the voting centers listed below. Direct balloting, when voters can insert their ballot into the ballot tabulator, begins August 2, 2022 for the primary election. For details visit:

www.co.washington.mn.us/3441/Voting

Vote Centers

- Washington County Government Center
- Cottage Grove Service Center
- Washington County Offices at Woodbury Central Park
- Oakdale City Hall
- Headwaters Service Center, Forest Lake

VOTE In Person on August 9, 2022

The polling location for Afton residents is Shepherd of the Valley, 14107 Hudson Rd S. Polling hours are 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

VOTER Registration

To check your voter registration status or register to vote, visit the MN Secretary of State's Voter Information Portal at: www.sos.state.mn.us or contact Washington County Elections at 651-430-6175.

Voters also may register on election day at the polling location.

Free Wood Chips

Free wood chips are available at the intersection of River Road and St. Croix Trail in Steamboat Park due to recent fallen tree removal.

The Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC)

is in need of additional members. The NRGC focuses on issues of environmental stewardship. Committee members attend area and regional meetings, particularly concerning the quality and quantity of water and other resources important to Afton. These issues are brought back to City Council with recommendations on actions. The Committee typically meets once per month, and the committee is discussing a new meeting time.

Applications are available on the city website or at City Hall.



Field of Bands

KORS 92 4 BANDS BEER GARDEN FOOD TRUCKS

September 17

Washington County Fairgrounds

TICKETS AT: 5cityyellowribbon.com

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL VETERANS



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

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Help shape the future of your library!



Take this short survey to provide input on Washington County Library's strategic plan.

WashCoLib.org/Survey



PATRON AFTON, MN 55001

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.

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.

- 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
- Ramsey County Yard Waste Collection Sites: Through a reciprocal use agreement with Ramsey County, Washington County residents may use the Arden Hills, Battle Creek, Frank & Sims and White Bear Township collection sites for free. Visit the Ramsey County website for more information.
<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/recycling-waste/collection-sites/yard-waste>
- Gertens in Denmark Township accepts brush and yard waste for a fee. Contact:
<https://www.gertens.com/atgertens/yard-waste.htm>
(651) 458-4412
- Local tree service companies may pick up brush from your residence for a fee.

2022 Afton Elections November 8, 2022

City Council seats up for November 8, 2022 General Election will be:

- Ward 2 — 4-year term (must reside in Ward 2)
- Ward 3 — 4-year term (must reside in Ward 3)
- Mayor — 2-year term (at-large; Afton resident)

Candidate filing period for open City Council seats:

August 2 through August 16 at 5:00 p.m.

The city website tab “Election and Voting Information” has the Ward Boundary map. City Council candidates must file for candidacy during the filing period. If you’d like to file by mail, contact the office and we will send you the forms. You also may schedule an appointment to come to City Hall and file in person. The filing fee is \$2.00. All City Council seats are non-partisan.

Eastbound I-94 Lane Closure

Roseville, Minn. – Motorists will encounter a long-term alternating lane closure on Interstate 94 between Woodbury and Lakeland in the east metro.

Beginning at 5 a.m. Monday, July 18, eastbound I-94 will be reduced to two lanes between Woodbury Drive in Woodbury and the St Croix River near Lakeland through late October. No ramp closures are planned as part of the work in 2022.

These lane closures are necessary as crews reinforce the shoulders along eastbound I-94, removing pavement and replacing it with a thicker layer of pavement that will withstand high traffic volumes allowing the contractor to maintain two lanes of traffic in each direction during the upcoming 2023 I-94 resurfacing project.

I-94 between Highway 120/Century Avenue and the St. Croix River will undergo a two-and-a-half-year pavement improvement construction project beginning in July 2022. The work will improve safety, traffic flow and ride smoothness. Construction will occur in three stages with most of the work happening in 2023 and 2024.

For more information, including construction schedule and upcoming traffic impacts, visit the project webpage at mndot.gov/metro/projects/i94oakdale-stcroix.