



# September 2022

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

## City of Afton Dashboard A Summary of Current Happenings

- ◆ This year's **Art in the Park** event will be held on September 24 and 25. The 44th Annual two day outdoor fine arts and makers market takes place in Afton's Town Square Park with over 90 vendors showcasing fine arts, pottery, woodwork, jewelry, photography, sculpture, fiber and more. Plus great food and 2 days of live music.
- ◆ **Recycling** is now available in Town Square Park. New containers that enable recycling of cans and bottles have been installed in Town Square Park through a grant from Washington County.
- ◆ A **dog waste** bag dispenser has been installed in Town Square Park to remind and enable dog owners to clean-up after their pets.
- ◆ **I-94 Construction**  
The reduction to two lanes on eastbound I-94 is planned to end in late October. The work this year is in preparation for the main portion of the construction, which will occur in 2023 and 2024.

**Drivers are reminded to please watch your speed on local roads!**



## Afton State Park Road Closure to Impact Visitors in September

Major portions of Afton State Park will be inaccessible by vehicle for two weeks in September while a bridge repair project takes place on the main road through the park.

The main road leading to the parking lots will be closed past the park office starting on Monday, September 12. Reopening of the road is expected on Monday, September 26. There will be no camping or lodging reservations available, and the visitor center will be closed during the bridge repair project.

Parking on roads adjacent to the park is not allowed. Visitors may enter the park on foot, but hikers should avoid the construction area as it will remain active during the construction period.

The park office will remain open for sales of vehicle permits and merchandise during the project. Restrooms at the office and vault toilets in the park will remain open.

For updates, visit the park's website: [https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_parks](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks)  
651-201-6780

## CITY MEETINGS

**September 5, 2022**

*City Office Closed  
in observance of Labor Day*

**September 20, 2022**

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

**September 28, 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**

## Notes from the Mayor

Work continues on the new open space and trail system project being led by Belwin in partnership with Washington County and the city. Belwin crews are hard at work preparing for the opening of the Oxbow Trails which will be accessed from St. Croix Trail north of Valley Creek. The name comes from the contours of the land and the shape of the wetland located on the property. I am told this indicates a former oxbow. In a nutshell, an oxbow is a place where a curve in a stream becomes separated from the current when the channel shifts. These areas can be very beneficial to the environment and if you are interested, I would recommend a little research to learn more about it.

Belwin staff are using wood chips from the invasive species removal work they have already completed to cover the new trails. You might have seen the largest pile of wood chips I personally have ever seen if you were driving down St. Croix Trail this summer near the site as they prepared for this work. Belwin plans to have the area open in a limited capacity in late September or early October while continuing the habitat restoration work. I am very excited for this new open space. It promises to offer a beautiful, short hike through some very different environments. Look for details on the opening from Belwin and the city on their websites and other social media platforms later this month. I will share it as soon as I see it.

In other news, the budget planning process for 2023 began last month. We saw some larger than normal increases in some of our budget items for public safety, most notably the costs we pay to the Washington County Sheriff as well as others. Additionally, the state legislature failed to make permanent the local street aid for small cities we received for the last two years. This is very disappointing as the actual cost to ensure all cities get this type of aid is relatively small. We had reduced our planned budget increase for our local road program last year to see what the state would do. Given the lack of action, we will need to make up the difference this year in order to ensure the plan we laid out many years ago is properly funded and we continue to have the resources to maintain our infrastructure. That being said, we are fortunate this year to have the ability to move some items around, and utilize some one-time payments the city received to potentially mitigate these increased costs. The council continues to work on this and is committed to keeping any budget increases down as much as possible.

In September, a preliminary budget and property tax levy based on this work will be reviewed at the council meeting and voted on. Once approved, the budget and tax levy can be reduced prior to final approval in December, but it cannot be increased.

At our August meeting we were lucky to have another volunteer step forward for our Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee. Elissa Thompson brings a great deal of expertise on habitat restoration and other work on environmental issues that will be invaluable to the city. Thank you, Elissa!

-Bill

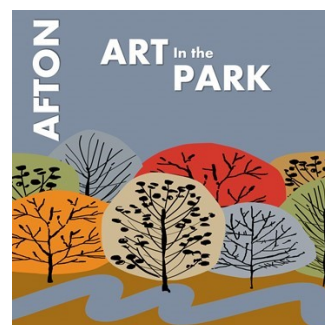
### Great River Greening Volunteer Opportunity

Saturday, September 10, 9:00 am—noon

Great River Greening, a non-profit that engages volunteers in ecological restoration projects has an upcoming volunteer opportunity at Crestview Elementary School in Cottage Grove. Volunteers will plant 300 native trees and shrubs at the forest adjacent to the school.

To learn more and register visit:  
[Greatrivergreening.org/events](http://Greatrivergreening.org/events)

651-272-3989



**Afton Art in the Park  
September 24 & 25,  
2022**

Saturday 10am – 5pm  
Sunday 11am - 4pm

<http://exploreafton.com/>

## Meeting Highlights

### August 1, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting

#### The Commission:

- Reviewed a Draft Ordinance Amendment to define the “nature center”
- Reviewed a Draft Ordinance Amendment regarding Simple Subdivisions
- Discussed groundwater protection measures.

### August 16, 2022 City Council Meeting

#### The Council:

- Reviewed a Draft Ordinance Amendment to define the “nature center”
- Reviewed a Draft Ordinance Amendment regarding Simple Subdivisions
- Approved a 30 mph speed limit on Odell Ave.
- Approved a Simple Subdivision at 2771 & 2783 Trading Post Trail.
- Approved a request for extension of a Variance and Conditional Use Permit at 3185 St. Croix Trail.
- Appointed Elissa Thompson to the Natural Resources & Groundwater Committee.

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

### Women Walking

Friday, September 16 and Saturday, September 17

6:00 - 9:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Savanna Center, 795 Indian Trail, Afton, MN 55001

Cost: \$20 RSVP Required.

### Celebrating Your Wild Voice!

Saturday, September 24 and Saturday, October 15

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S, Afton, MN 55001

Cost: Sliding Scale of \$35, \$50, or \$70

### Filmed at Belwin Screening: *Reckless, blooming, and LÍNEAS de SANGRE*

Thursday, September 29

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S, Afton, MN 55001

Cost: Free

For details on all events contact:

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

## Parks Committee Update

**Pollinator Trail at City Hall:** The committee is continuing its installation of a pollinator demonstration garden around City Hall using native plants. The perennial garden is expanding as planned, but we had to pivot on the other planned sections to accommodate drier than expected soils and weed pressure from surrounding trees. The area east of City Hall will now be converted into a shortgrass prairie, and the strip to the north will be a collection of native trees and shrubs. All plantings will be able to accommodate dry soil conditions once established. We think this setup will suit the site nicely, and create a beautiful, lasting, easily manageable habitat.

**Meadow Ridge:** Work continues as planned for the 3-year conversion of the approximately 4.5 acre parcel at the corner of Nybeck Ave and Oakgreen Circle. The City of Afton received a CPL grant for this project, which will turn the formerly unmanaged plot into a landscape that will be similar to a native savanna, using a combination of prairie plants and groupings of trees. The focus this first year is on clearing invasive and unwanted brush.

**Join the Committee:** The Parks Committee is always open to new members! Please inquire with the city for more details.

Grant Jensen, Committee Chair

## 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.



**KORS 92** **4 BANDS** **BEER GARDEN** **FOOD TRUCKS**

# Field of Bands

**September 17**

Washington County Fairgrounds

TICKETS AT: [5cityyellowribbon.com](http://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](http://WashCoLib.org/Survey)



## 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.

- 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.

### Eastbound I-94 Lane Closures

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 <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i94oakdale-stcroix/>



KID'S ARE  
BACK IN SCHOOL

**PLEASE DRIVE SAFE-**