

City of Afton, Minnesota
Heritage Preservation Commission
LOCAL PROPERTY DESIGNATION

DRAFT

NAME OF PROPERTY:

Historic Name: Afton Township Hall
Other Names: Afton Town Hall
SHPO Inventory No.: WA-AFC-
Parcel No: 10.028.20.32.0004

LOCATION:

Street & No.: 1675 Stagecoach Trail South
City/Town: Afton
State, County, Zip: Minnesota, Washington County, 55001

PROPERTY OWNER:

Owner Name: City of Afton
Owner Phone/Cell:
Street & No.: 3033 St. Croix Trail South
City/State/Zip: Afton, Minnesota 55001

CLASSIFICATION:

<i>Ownership of Property</i>	<i>Category of Property:</i>	<i>Number of Resources within Property</i>	
		<i>Contributing</i>	<i>Noncontributing</i>
	X building(s)	1	1
private	district		buildings
X public	site		sites
	structure		structures
	object		objects
		1	1 TOTAL

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places: 0 *Open to the Public:* No

FUNCTION or USE:

Historic Functions: GOVERNMENT: city hall
Current Functions: DOMESTIC: secondary structure

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SIGNIFICANCE:

Historic significance: Associated with activities, processes, events, trends or persons of importance to the community, state or nation.

Narrative Statement:

In the area called Valley Creek, just northwest of the old village of Afton, the original Town Hall still stands. Charles Bolles, son of one of the earliest settlers to the area, Erastus Bolles, sold a piece of land to the township for the Township Hall for \$75, circa 1883. Farmer August Kleinschmidt hauled the lumber to build the building. (Grant) A wood stove was purchased for the building in 1884 for twenty-eight dollars (with delivery costing another eighteen dollars.) The Historic Afton Valley Creek Tour brochure shows a map dated 1886 indicating the Town Hall located just east and north of a store and post office and south of a confectionary shop. The building remains at what is believed to be its original location where, at some point, it was raised for the construction of a concrete block foundation.

This building served the community for public gatherings of many kinds. Town meetings and local and national elections voting were held there, as well as school presentations and theater productions. In the early 1900s, in spite of having built two schools to that point, overcrowding forced the community to hire an additional teacher and the Town Hall was utilized for classes for a time. (Historic Afton Valley Creek Tour)

This building served as the community's town hall for more than 100 years. In 1970, when the township merged with Afton village, the governmental functions moved into what is now the Afton Historical Society Museum; then relocated just a few short years later to its current quarters at 3033 St. Croix Trail.

Architectural significance: Possessing distinctive characteristics of a style, place, period, method or materials of construction, builder or architect.

Architectural Classification:	Civic building
Materials Used:	Wood frame, Asphalt shingles
Foundation:	Concrete block
Walls:	Wood
Roof:	Asphalt shingled

Narrative Description:

The Afton Township Hall was built circa 1883 on Stagecoach Trail in the settlement of Valley Creek. Located approximately 2 miles northwest of Afton Village the building now known as the Afton Town Hall was built as the Afton Township Hall.

The civic building is utilitarian in design and displays a simple, symmetrical distribution of fenestration on all elevations. The wood frame building is sheathed in shiplap wood siding. The roof displays aging asphalt shingles. The structure at some point was raised and basement excavated and a relatively new concrete block foundation built. A simple brick stove chimney sits at the easterly ridge of the roof.

The main elevation providing the only entry to the one room structure faces west along Stagecoach Trail. The only fenestration on the west and main elevation is a centered door opening and a set of original, paneled entry doors. To the south of the doors is an original "PUBLIC POST" board. Above the entry in the front gable is a

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hand painted sign that reads “AFTON TOWN HALL.” At the ridge of the front gable is an original or very early flag pole.

The north and the south (side) elevation of the Hall display three symmetrically placed large and original two-over-two double-hung windows. The back east elevation displays two balanced two-over-two double-hung windows equally in size to those in the side elevation.

The interior of the Hall is clad on the walls and ceiling with wood beadboard. Hanging on the back (east) wall is a platform that supports the truncated brick stove chimney above. The ceiling also displays two rows of newer semi-globed suspended ceiling lights and a ceiling fan.

Other unique and original features include a raised stage at the eastern end of the hall. The stage was partially enclosed with a short wood ledge that is capped with a polished wood rail and displays polished wood finials at its corners. The north wall also displays a series of wood panel doors attached to the outside wall and floor at 90 degrees that served as dividers between individual voting stations.

The Hall also retains some oddly placed decorative posts. Their placement and attachment cavities suggest that they may have been used to cord off portions of the room or direct movement within the open space.

The Hall’s parcel also supports a large modern utility truck garage. The four bay structure is constructed of rough and smooth face concrete block with some brick infill. The building located along the northern property line is noncontributing to the site’s historic significance.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT: The Afton Township Hall is significant as playing a major civic role in the rural and industrial settlement of Valley Creek to the northwest of Afton Village. The town hall structure has retained its original fenestration, siding, and interior features including a community stage and unique door/panel separated voting stations. The period of significance spans the time from the Hall’s early construction circa 1883 to 1970 when the township was consolidated into the City of Afton and the Hall was retired from civic use.

OTHER ITEMS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

<p><i>Related Historic Contexts:</i> Townsite Development in Washington County 1839-1955 Immigration and Ethnicity in Washington County ca. 1838-1920 Early Agriculture and River Settlement 1840-1870 Railroads and Agriculture Development 1870-1940</p>	<p><i>Significant Person(s):</i></p>
<p><i>Period of Significance:</i> Circa 1883 to 1970</p>	<p><i>Cultural Affiliation:</i></p>
<p><i>Significant Dates:</i></p>	<p><i>Architect/Builder(s):</i></p>

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage of Property: 1.28

Legal Description of Property: PT NW1/4-SW1/4 BEING W 215FT OF N 240FT OF S 479.25FT SECTION 10
TOWNSHIP 028 RANGE 020

Boundary Justification: Washington County tax records, Afton Village boundaries

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION:

Current Photographs:



The Afton Township Hall built circa 1883 in Valley Creek retains most of its original exterior and interior architectural features. Camera facing east across Stagecoach Trail.

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The Township Hall displays its original entry doors and its side elevation two-over-two double-hung windows. The only architectural feature that has been added since the hall's early construction is a 20th century concrete block foundation.



The Township Hall now shares its parcel with a City of Afton maintenance garage to the north.

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The south and east-facing elevations of the Hall display their original windows and the stove chimney.



The peak of the front gable retains its original flagpole.

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The original "PUBLIC POST" board remains to the right of the entry on the west-facing elevation.



The interior walls and ceiling are sheathed in a beadboard finish. Camera looking to the east.

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Interior view looking to the west.



The brick chimney that vented the original stove sits on a platform on the east wall. .

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The Hall is currently being used for storage.. The edge of the stage (with finial) can be seen elevated a few steps above the floor. Also note the two-toned door that defines one of the north wall's voting stations.



Voting stations divided by residential doors still remain along the northern wall of the interior.

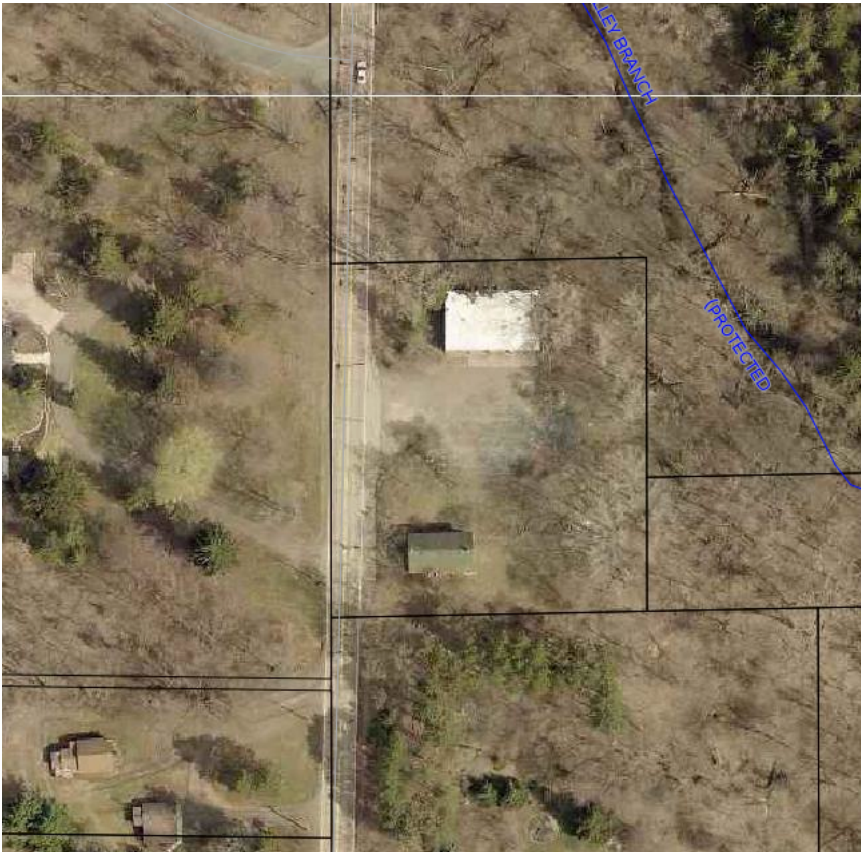
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Afton City utility garage located on the north property line of the Afton Township Hall parcel.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH(S) AND SITE MAP(S) OF THE PROPERTY:



Aerial photograph of the Afton Township Hall to the south and the City of Afton Truck garage to the north.

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Parcel map for the Afton Township Hall on Stagecoach Trail South in the Valley Creek area. .

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES:

Published

Afton Historical Museum. Various archives. Fall/Winter 2015-2016.

Dieters, Ricard. "This is Afton" Bulletin 91. Nd.

Hazelwood Cemetery records. Bayport.

Robb, Edwin G. *Afton Remembered*. Afton Historical Society Press: Afton. 1996.

Washington County deed summary records.

Unpublished

Martens, Ken. Interview. May 10, 2016.

Martens, Ken. Interview May 14, 2016.

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FORM PREPARED BY:

Name/Title: Thomas R. Zahn & Associates LLC
Street & No.: 807 Holly Avenue
City/Town: Saint Paul
State, County, Zip: Minnesota, Ramsey County, 55104
Telephone No.: 651-221-9765
Date Prepared: May 28, 2016

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER COMMENT:

Review and comment by the State Historic Preservation Officer pursuant to Minnesota Statute _____; Subd. ____.

Date Submitted to SHPO: _____ Date of SHPO Comment: _____

AFTON CITY COUNCIL REVIEW / APPROVAL:

Designation of property pursuant to: _____

Date of Action: _____