



September 2021

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

City of Afton Dashboard
A Summary of Current Happenings

- ◆ River Road residents - a reminder that a natural gas pipe is buried in a very shallow trench alongside the entire length of the road, just inches to a few feet from the west edge of the road. The City has a utility easement that overlays the gas pipe the entire length of River Road. Do not dig in this area without utilities being located. Contact Public Works if you have questions.
- ◆ The pedestrian path from the Steamboat Park parking lot in the Old Village to the river has been reworked to lessen the severity of the path's slope.
- ◆ Some washouts on 32nd street occurred during a recent heavy rain fall. Public works is working on repairs and adding an asphalt swale to prevent further occurrences.
- ◆ A prairie restoration/pollinator project in Meadow Ridge Park is continuing to move forward after a "Walk N Talk" public outreach event on August 24th. The project is planned to be funded through a grant from the DNR. Meadow Ridge Park is located at the NE corner of Oakgreen Circle South and Nybeck and is open to the public. Thanks to the Parks Committee for their continuing work on this project.
- ◆ The City Council is working on obtaining additional funding for the settlement of the Afton House lawsuit. We fully expect to receive significant funding to help the City cover these additional project costs. We will provide updates on those efforts as we have them.
- ◆ The third Solar Farm in the new Afton Business Park was approved after a third revision to the tree cutting plan was presented. The revision significantly reduces the amount of cutting and particularly cutting on the slopes.
- ◆ The Zoning Code Amendment relating to vineyards in Afton was denied and referred to the new Ag Preservation Committee for further discussion on broadening the scope to include other ag products.
- ◆ A new commercial building at 3185 St. Croix Trail in the Old Village (just south of the Afton Historical Museum) was granted a variance and CUP to construct a commercial building for a center for health and wellness that includes practitioners of health and wellness counseling. The new building will share parking space with the Museum.
- ◆ Council approved crack filling on 13.5 miles of Afton's roads.
- ◆ The Sheriff is reminding Afton residents to keep your garages and cars closed, locked and secure. Woodbury has recently had a rash of auto thefts.
- ◆ Thank you to the several residents who have recently signed up to serve on the newly formed Ag Preservation Committee and the Parks Committee.

- SAR

CITY MEETINGS

September 6, 2021
City Office Closed
in observance of Labor Day

September 21, 2021
City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M. (In-Person)

September 22, 2021
Parks Committee Meeting
6:00 P.M. (In-Person)

Public Participation Via Zoom Will Continue to be Available for City Council Meetings.
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

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

Last month, the MPCA and the DNR released the final east metro drinking water supply plan. This plan will be funded by the state's settlement with 3M. Throughout this long process, Afton has advocated that full funding for private well treatment be preserved and included, both for currently treated wells and into the future in the event the plume spreads and impacts other wells in our city. Over the last two years or so, I have met many times with the MPCA and the DNR as they provided updates and asked for feedback. Our city administrator and engineer have participated at the monthly government and 3M working group meetings, as well as Barbara Ronningen, former chair of our planning commission, who participated on the citizen - business working group during that same timeframe. Thank you Barbara for all your work on this issue.

Our message remained consistent through that process: Afton was not looking for a global solution where water lines would be run throughout the city; we wanted to see money set aside for any potential future spread of the contaminant plume; and the city wanted funding plans that would pay for the operation and maintenance of the private well treatment systems for the longest period of time possible.

The final plan meets most of our goals. The adopted plan funds the continued treatment of wells and funds operation and maintenance for 30 years. It also has funds set aside for any new wells that may be impacted if the plume spreads. The plan does not call for any communal treatment options or the installation of water lines in Afton and instead focuses on ensuring our private wells are treated.

The plan has a large amount of money included for potential cost overruns for the larger municipal components of the plan that will serve larger communities in the east metro. If the projects stay within or near the current budgeted amounts, those funds will be up for comment when the construction is complete. At that time we will once again need to be ready to advocate to have any excess funds applied to the ongoing treatment and mitigation of issues related to private wells. This would include any changes to the expected plume migration, and extending the duration of the operation and maintenance of the treatment systems on impacted private wells. Given the geology and the data on the movement currently available, it is not expected that the plume will move through all of Afton. However, as a community we will need to remain engaged and attentive to any changes in the projections and the impacts.

There is one issue I am still concerned about and have expressed this to the MPCA and DNR during our meetings. Years ago a stormwater control project was installed to deal with flooding issues in Lake Elmo and the surrounding areas that appears to be playing a role in how these contaminants are getting to Afton. I know the MPCA and DNR are committed to continuing to work on this, and there is general agreement that this stormwater control system is playing a role in the spread of the contaminants into our community. As a city we will need to remain focused and committed to see what can be done on that issue. It is not a simple issue, there is no clear or easy fix, but I am confident there is something that can be done to slow or stop the movement of the plume to the southeast.

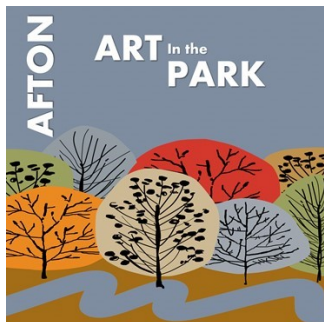
In city business, last month the council approved the third and final solar project to be located in the industrial zone near Manning Avenue and Hudson Road. This project faced many hurdles related to the site and I want to thank everyone involved who continued to work to find a solution, especially Council Member Annie Perkins.

Lastly, the city will begin the first of three budget meetings in early September. A city's budget is really a statement of its values, and in Afton, what that shows first and foremost is a strong commitment to roads and infrastructure, while being good stewards of the City's finances. We will also be looking at current and future needs in all aspects of our local government as we are seeing an uptick in activity throughout the city. Overall, I think we are in a good spot right now. Please contact your council member or myself with any thoughts or questions you have regarding this budget process.

-Bill

More Volunteers Needed to Serve on the Ag Preservation Committee

As reported in the August City Newsletter, the Mayor and City Council approved the formation of an Ag Preservation Committee for the purpose of supporting and preserving the continuation of sustainable agriculture in our community. The Council has appointed five members to the Ag Preservation Committee, but is seeking more residents to serve on the committee, particularly someone who is involved in traditional farming in Afton. The Council would like to make final appointments to the committee at its September 21 regular meeting, so that the committee could meet for the first time in October.



**Afton Art in the Park
September 25 & 26,
2021**

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

<http://exploreafton.com/>

Meeting Highlights

August 2, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a Minor Subdivision application at 623 Neal Ave S.
- Held a public hearing for a Minor Subdivision application at 14441 30th St S.
- Held a public hearing for a Variance and Conditional Use Permit for a new commercial building at 3185 St Croix Trail S.
- Held a public hearing for a zoning code amendment regarding vineyards.

August 17, 2021 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Approved a Minor Subdivision application at 623 Neal Ave S.
- Approved a Minor Subdivision application at 14441 30th St S.
- Approved a Variance and Conditional Use Permit for a new commercial building at 3185 St Croix Trail S.
- Approved the revised plan for Impact Power Solutions Conditional Use Permit for a Solar Farm in the Afton Business Park, which reduced the amount of tree cutting, including cutting on slopes.
- Approved improvements to the pedestrian path from the levee to Steamboat Park to reduce the slope.
- Approved the crack filling project for 13 miles of roads.
- Referred the zoning code amendment regarding vineyards to the Ag Preservation Committee for further discussion.
- Appointed Angela Tangen to a 3-year term on the Parks Committee.
- Approved applicants to serve on the Ag Preservation Committee.

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

Final East Metro Drinking Water Supply Plan

The final Drinking Water Supply Plan has been released and is now available on the 3M Settlement webpage, which can be accessed using the following link:
<https://3msettlement.state.mn.us/>

On that webpage you can find a link to the press release announcing the comprehensive drinking water plan for 14 East Metro communities impacted by PFAS, a link to the Final Drinking Water Supply Plan webpage for an overview of the plan and community projects, and a link to the full plan for more detailed information. The Mayor's note in this Newsletter provides additional information specific to the City of Afton.

Citizen Feedback Requested Regarding Solid Waste and Recycling Services

The City is in the process of requesting proposals for solid waste and recycling services. To assist in this process, the City is requesting feedback from residents and businesses regarding these services. The City is using Survey Monkey as an easy way for residents and businesses to provide their feedback. The survey will take 1-2 minutes to complete. Please use the following link to access and complete the survey by September 22:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/296GCH5>

Your feedback will assist the City in evaluating the proposals to be received. Thank you in advance for completing the survey.



KID'S ARE
BACK IN SCHOOL

PLEASE DRIVE SAFE-

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events



50th Celebration Open House

Saturday, October 9

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Free and open to everyone.

Celebrate Belwin's 50th anniversary by exploring all of Belwin's public trails. Educational programming, live music, picnicking and more.

belwin.org/events

info@belwin.org

651-436-5189

Public Hiking Trails

Belwin Conservancy has more than 7 miles of hiking trails that are free and open to the public from dawn to dusk, 365 days/year.

Stagecoach Prairie features 4.5 miles of trails great for bird watching. Dogs must be on leash.

The 2.5 miles of trails at **Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields** are teeming with life. A labyrinth is located in the northeastern section. Dogs must be on leash.

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

Confidential Paper Shredding at the Environmental Center

Confidential document shredding will be available at the Washington County Environmental Center, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on:

- Wednesday, Sept. 29

- Wednesday, Nov. 17

The Washington County Environmental Center provides residents with a free and convenient disposal option for household hazardous waste, electronics, and recyclables all year round.

The center accepts household hazardous waste, electronics, and recyclables.

WASHINGTON COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
4039 Cottage Grove Drive
Woodbury, MN 55129
 651-275-7475



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



PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
AFTON MN 55001
PERMIT NO. 15

Valley Library

Find Events, Activities, and Storytimes at Valley Library

Valley Library is offering a variety of indoor, outdoor, and virtual programs for all ages! 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

**PATRON
AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter

IN COLOR
on the city website.



Please recycle this newsletter after use.

FIRE DEPARTMENT RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the retirement of Greg Michel after 28+ years as a member of the Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department. Greg began his service in January of 1993 and has served in numerous capacities up to and including as a Captain and Deputy Chief for 24 years. He has served on numerous committees throughout his time on the department, but perhaps most notably, Greg secured a significant FEMA grant that provided a substantial budget relief to the Fire District and the community for Air Packs and Harnesses and a brand new fill station for refilling bottles after use several years ago. We also wish to thank Greg's wife, Cheryl, and their family for their commitment to both our department and community.

Due to increased Covid restrictions we will not be able to celebrate his retirement with an open house at the station. We wish him and his family all the best.

Jim Stanley
Fire Chief



FIELD OF BANDS

In Memory of Randy Kopesky

September 18, 2021 12N-8:00PM

FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT SERVICEMEMBERS, VETERANS and THEIR FAMILIES



Anderson Daniels



Wayward Boyz Klub



WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Rain or Shine!

Will be moved indoors if it rains!

FOOD TRUCKS



Bring your Lawn Chair

Tickets available at 5cityyellowribbon.com

\$20 in advance; \$30 day of show

More information on FACEBOOK

Yellow Ribbon Alliance Lower St.Croix Valley (YRALSCV)