

RM of Springfield COW August 10, 2021  
and Council Meeting August 17, 2021

WITHOUT PREJUDICE (E&OE)

Both of the above meetings were cancelled by Council but I felt a recap of the decisions that affect all residents of Springfield, particularly the ratepayers, are worthy of review. ELECTIONS are the talk of the media these days. There will be a federal election on September 20, 2021. The next municipal election is scheduled for October 2022. There is even talk of a Provincial election since the Premier, Brian Pallister, has stepped down from the post. Councillor Wilson has resigned from Council so there will be a bi-election for Ward 3. Your vote in these elections will to a large degree determine your quality of life in the next number of years and therefore it is important to choose wisely who you wish to represent your interests, considering the record of those who are currently in power. Too many of the decisions Council has made to date, in my opinion and those of others, have not been positive for Springfield.

WARD BOUNDARY REDUCTION

Council passed a resolution February 2, 2021 decreasing the size of Council to 4 Councillors and revising the wards (By-Law 20-23). At that meeting, Jan Nylen stated to Council "I would like to know why Council after investing time and effort in a review process of the Ward system seem now to be missing out a key step in completing a transparent and public engagement process: i.e. an opportunity to review various configurations of a 4 ward system. I had hoped maybe naively that there would be a public presentation that identified the ward committee's objectives, methodology, survey outcomes and then laid out various 4 ward boundary options for further public review and feedback. ... There is no urgency ... The deadline for it to be passed is April of 2022. the Municipal Board order said...In addition the Board wishes to underline to the Municipality and Council the importance of ensuring robust and transparent public engagement and communication throughout the process. Doing so would provide residents with an opportunity to provide feedback regarding alternatives and ensure that the Council be provided with the necessary information to make a fully informed decision consistent with the wishes of residents of the Municipality. " Ms. Nylen also pointed out that while By-law 01-17 has previously been rescinded by By-law 09-27, By-law 01-24 that established a 5 ward system for Springfield has not been rescinded. Council has ignored this advice! NOTE: In the original survey, residents were given several choices but not one of them was to LEAVE COUNCIL AS IS, WITH 5 COUNCILLORS AND A REEVE. On my form, I did not select any of the choices provided but wrote "I prefer Council to remain as is, with 5 councillors and a reeve." The population of Springfield has increased, not decreased, so I felt the only obvious choices were to let Council remain in its current configuration or increase it by one councillor and I believe I said so on my form. No mention of that result by Mayor Fell and her Council. I know of at least one other household that said the same thing as I did. IN MY OPINION, I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED RECONFIGURING THE EXISTING WARDS TO MANIPULATE THE POPULATION NUMBERS. Ward 5 could have been moved further eastward and its northern boundary moved a little farther south perhaps, Ward 2 (Oakbank) could have taken in the town only, Wards 3 and 1 could have absorbed part of Ward 5 (the northern part) and part of Ward 3 respectively to even out the numbers. I believe it could have been done without my having the actual population numbers in hand. In any case reduction should never have been considered, but rather an increase. If your population has increased significantly, why would one contemplate a decrease in representation. Myself, I thought 5 councillors and a reeve were sufficient and appropriate. There must have been feedback from constituents as the Municipal Board will be holding a hearing in this regard as follows. Mayor Fell stated the rationale for rejecting the 5 ward system was to avoid "tied" votes which history would show was hardly ever a problem.

The Municipal Board has published the following notice: RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF SPRINGFIELD BY-LAW NO. 20-23 RESPECTING WARD BOUNDARIES, MUNICIPAL BOARD FILE NO. 21E5-0001 TAKE NOTICE that under Section 89(1) of *The Municipal Act*, The Municipal Board has been requested in writing by at least 25 electors to review the Rural Municipality of Springfield By-law No. 20-23 respecting Ward Boundaries THE MUNICIPAL BOARD will hold a public hearing on Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Rural Municipality of Springfield, Dugald Community Club, 544 Holland Street, Dugald, Manitoba, to review the By-law. The Board requires that any person who wishes to attend the hearing, must register at least ten (10) working days in advance of the hearing by filing a completed Attendee / Presenter Form with the Municipal Board. The form can be found on the Municipal Board Website under Hearing Notices. In addition, the Board requires that any party who intends to submit as evidence at the hearing any written material or other documents, shall file four (4) copies of that material with the Board and one (1) copy with the Municipality for public review, at least 10 working days prior to the hearing. If a party wishes to have service in French, or requires assistance because of a disability, they must notify this office 15 days prior to the hearing. Dated at The RM of Springfield, in Manitoba, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021. Shelley Jensen, Secretary/Chief Administrative Officer, The Municipal Board Colleen Draper, Chief Administrative Officer, Rural Municipality of Springfield.

This is your opportunity to stand up for your right to representation by an official elected from your area who is familiar with your wants and needs. I urge everyone to mark the date and time on your calendars and register by September 2, 2021 so you can formally express your concerns with respect to reduction in representation. The amount of money saved annually is insignificant compared to the amount of money being wasted in legal actions by this Council. NOW IS THE TIME TO SPEAK OUT. It is only a few hours of your time but the results of the hearing could have lasting consequences to your quality of life.

CAN WHITE SANDS

The following notice was provided to me by a reader.

*We are writing to share an update on CanWhite Sands' proposal to extract and process silica sand in eastern Manitoba. Our records show that you registered for our public meeting last year so we want to give you the first chance to sign up for our next community event. Please join us for a virtual Public Open House on August 24 at 6pm where we will be: providing an update on our project; sharing the results of recent independent hydrogeological study and environment impact assessment, and answering your questions. At last year's event, many local residents had questions about how our plans might impact their water. We recognize the importance of this issue and look forward to introducing you to the experts that can confirm how our project will be designed and operated to protect the environment and help grow your local economy. To register for the virtual open house: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_zAp3AntjSz0OUBr-6qW0RQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zAp3AntjSz0OUBr-6qW0RQ)*

While other southeastern municipalities currently have a moratorium on this company boring holes into their lands, our Municipality is in favour of this Alberta company coming into our municipality and boring holes 200 ft. into the ground and extracting silica sand mixed with our **drinking water**. While they continue with the myth that the water will be safely returned to the aquifer, common sense would suggest otherwise. Once that slurry is brought up and piped in some manner to the proposed processing plant in Vivian, the sand and water will be ultimately exposed to the environment and contamination potentially can occur. Further when you remove material from 200 ft. beneath the ground, it leaves a void. Such voids are the cause of the recent earthquake in Saskatchewan due to potash mining. The aquifer from which the sand is being extracted supplies potable water to Brokenhead, Springfield, Tache, Steinbach, Ste. Anne, Woodridge, in short, all the communities to the south and east of us. Until now, we in Springfield have been blessed with an abundant supply of potable water, those in the western portion from one aquifer and we in the east from another. However **Mayor Fell recently announced that the RM would no longer be sourcing water from the Heatherdale wells**, which are under threat from the aggregate industry, but would be obtaining all municipal water from the 2 new wells on Poplar Road. The water from this source is very high in fluoride and iron and in studies done previously, it was stated **water** from this source would have to be **admixed** with water from the **Heatherdale wells** to make it **usable**. Mayor Fell has stated that henceforth the water from Poplar Road will be treated with reverse osmosis which not only is **costly** but **wastes** a lot of **water** in the process. The infrastructure for treating the water, to the best of my knowledge, does not currently exist. **NOTE: I UNDERSTAND THE R.F.P. (Request for Proposals) for the reverse osmosis plant was just done on August 12th. There will be at least a few weeks required for proposals and then those proposals will have to be examined and the contract will be awarded. By the time the work gets started, it will be well into the fall and it will not be available for quite some time.** Mayor Fell has just recently announced that the RM of Springfield will be decommissioning the Heatherdale wells and sourcing all municipal water from the Poplar Road Wells. Perhaps she should have consulted with staff prior to making this announcement as the **Poplar Road Wells are not yet operational, the water from that source is very high in fluoride and needs to be treated by reverse osmosis (and as yet no such infrastructure exists) and chlorination.** To the best of my knowledge, no Environmental Assessment has been completed authorizing these changes. **The Mayor and her Council have demonstrated by their actions that they favour the interests of business enterprises over the interests of their residents**, which is characteristic of conservative governments. The aggregate industry wants to dredge gravel from the aquifer on Heatherdale without any interference and the new aggregate by-law contains no restrictions. **Mayor Fell seems to have no problem overstepping the BOUNDS OF HER AUTHORITY and being less than TRANSPARENT in the process. I urge all residents of Springfield to send Council a message discouraging this decision on the part of the Mayor, and copy their e-mail to the following agencies:**

Manitoba Municipal Board, 1144 - 363 Broadway, Winnipeg R3C 3N9 Telephone 204 - 945-2941  
Manitoba Conservation & Climate, Office of Drinking Water - 1007 Century St., Winnipeg, R3H 0W4 Telephone 204-945-5762 cc@gov.mb.ca  
Dennis Smook, MLA - Dennis.Smook@leg.gov.mb.ca MLA LaVerendrye Telephone 204-945-3709  
Ron Schuler, MLA - minmi@leg.gov.mb.ca Telephone 204 - 945-3723  
Ted Falk, MP - 9A-90 Brandt Street, Steinbach R5G 0T3 Telephone 204-326-9889 Toll Free 1-866-333-1933 ted.falk.c2@parl.gc.ca  
James Bezan, MP - 228 Manitoba Ave., Selkirk, R1A 0Y5 Telephone 204-785-6151 james.bezan@parl.gc.ca  
Council, RM of Springfield, 100 Springfield Centre Drive, Box 219, Oakbank R0E 1J0 Telephone 204-444-3321 info@rmofspringfield.ca

## AGGREGATE INDUSTRY

On the agenda of the August 3rd, 2021 Council meeting was 9.2 **By-Law 21-19 Aggregate By-Law 2nd and 3rd Reading**. That item was removed from the agenda because of "some feedback from the public". **Mayor Fell spoke of a study** "on the open water um around the uh Municipal wells on Garven". She spoke of "misinformation um being put out" regarding CanWhite Sands. She stated "aggregate is what we as a municipality have jurisdiction over...not silica sand." She said that was Provincial. She said "this Aggregate By-law ...has actually been worked on for 2 1/2 years..not something that has come up quickly." Aggregate By-law 21-19 which was on the agenda was to replace By-law 20-22 that had been based on the study and had just replaced the previous aggregate by-law. **NOTE: AND THAT DID COME UP QUICKLY.** During the last Council, an Aggregate Task Force met regularly to discuss issues surrounding the aggregate industry and our by-law 73-22 which contained restrictions that were never enforced causing the Heatherdale wells to go GUDI (an acronym for Groundwater Under the Direct Influence of surface water) and require treatment. In 2018 a Strategic Environmental Assessment of Aggregate Properties was approved which was to be included in the 2019 budget. At the August 3rd. Council meeting, **Mayor Fell is quoted as saying "Since 2018 the municipality has made long term plans to relocate it's raw water supply from the Moose Nose Aquifer that's just south of Birds Hill Park to the sandstone aquifer which is southeast of Dugald. This raw water supply source is considered deep, 325 ft. to get into the sandstone aquifer. It's secure so there's no groundw...groundwater under direct influence as with our previous supply. There's a lot of water there so a pump test result in excess of 500 gpm (gallons per minute). It's a stable groundwater source and it does not significantly change and it's easily treated so the well chemistry results on Phase 1 of the well system suggests treatment by reverse osmosis and chlorination will provide quality treated water."** **NOTE: That is news to me and I was a Councillor until October 2018.** **Mayor Fell further stated "Since 2018..2018 there have been 4 studies undertaken, 3 of them related to this water supply, one study done off of highway 207. So in May of 2019 there was a supplemental municipal groundwater supply for the RM of Springfield, in July of 2019 there was an Aquifer Capability and Groundwater Vulnerability for our RM, in February of 2020 there was a Supplemental Municipal Groundwater Supply study done as well and there was a statement on Groundwater under direct Influence of Surface Water Status correspondence from the Office of Drinking Water. Additionally when we completed the Development Plan this term, Council asked staff to embark on a study of highway 207 because we designated some business lands for that area and that was a hydrolog...hydrological review ..Groundwater Resource Potential was the name of the study and now we're going to continue to focus on our water supply and we are going to embark on a study off of Garven Road for our water supply there."** **NOTE: I follow all meetings of Council and there was never, to my knowledge, any mention of a hydrological review or study called Groundwater Resource Potential.** **Mayor Fell continued "....everything that was done is done with conjunction with the Province because they have the jurisdiction over groundwater."** At that point, **Councillor Rakle** interjected to say "Maybe just mention because a lot more people have come on that we're holding that back. **Mayor Fell** concluded by saying they would "finish the study, look at the recommendations...see if...any of them need to be embedded into the Aggregate By-law...should take 3 to 4 months." **NOTE: In short, Mayor Fell and Council have decided to source municipal water from the**

Poplar Road wells rather than the Heatherdale wells, I think to defer criticism of the aggregate industry endangering the supply there, without any consideration of whether the Poplar Road wells can produce a sufficient quantity and quality of water without it being admixed with water from the Heatherdale wells. This is to me very egregious and everyone east of Dugald that currently has a well drawing water from the Sandilands Aquifer should be very concerned, especially now with the CanWhite Sands project that plans to extract both the sand and water from over 2500 boreholes in this aquifer every year for 24 year. ANOTHER INDICATION THAT BUSINESS INTERESTS ARE BEING CONSIDERED OVER THE WELL BEING OF RESIDENTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

### WHITE SHEPHERD HOLDINGS

Mr. Falk was, or still is, it is by no means clear, a shareholder of White Sheppard Holdings that is proposing to put up to 35 new 5 acre residential lots adjacent to the Oasis which will require upgrading of the access road(s) at the very least. His wife is still listed as a shareholder of that company. The lots will not be serviced, meaning 35 new wells tapping into the aquifer and 35 new septic fields on what are planned to be 5 acre lots. It will increase the traffic in the area as each home will have at least one vehicle, more likely two if not more. Our Mayor, Tiffany Fell, has always stated that she worked for Mr. Falk at Steinbach Credit Union. Further Mr. Schuler, MLA, that is known to the Mayor's children as Uncle Ronnie, a member of the Manitoba PC party, and the Mayor, are all of the same political persuasion as Mr. Falk. With that connection to both the Manitoba and federal PC parties, perhaps Mayor Fell should have removed herself from the vote on this proposed housing development. Something to think about when you go to the polls. **NOTE: In Canadian law, a reasonable apprehension of bias is a legal standard for disqualifying judges as administrative decision-makers for bias. Bias of the decision-maker can be real or merely perceived.** Conservative MP Ted Falk refuses to say whether he's vaccinated. Of Manitoba's 14 MPs, he's the only holdout on divulging that information. I just cannot understand what the need for secrecy is in this regard. It has nothing to do with the condition of your health, it is simply a choice and if one makes the choice not to get the COVID vaccine, and someone asks, tell them. Politicians always profess to be open and honest with the public. If Mr. Falk cannot be forthright about having a vaccination, one wonders what else he knows that he is not sharing with the public.

### BERGER PEAT PROCESSING PLANT

A legal action has been filed against the RM with respect to the approval of this enterprise. Council must respond by the court date of September 7, 2021. Regardless, there is activity on the site. I understand a representative of Berger has been travelling around on a riding mower visiting the neighbours and trying to convince them this will be of benefit to them. Of course this individual is not stating exactly what the benefit is and he certainly is not mentioning the amount of water from the aquifer that this company will be using to clean the peat that is being brought from the Hadashville area in trucks to the site via our highways and Oakwood which is a gravel road. It is possible that the same aquifer that is being tapped for the above new housing development will be supplying approximately 200 gallons/per minute of water to the peat plant, according to the license, which will be operating 24/7. A reader sent me the following link to an article on the subject. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbFt1YZ92Kc>



#### [Northern Sask. community fights to protect muskeg from peat harvesting](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbFt1YZ92Kc)

Members of a northern Saskatchewan community are fighting to protect the local peatlands, known as muskeg, from a Quebec company seeking to mine the area for peat moss. Locals argue the mining would destroy culture and have dire impacts on the environment. Watch The National live on YouTube Sunday-Friday at 9 p.m. ET Subscribe to The National ...

[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)