

CITY OF STEINBACH  
Regular Council Meeting  
April 1, 2025

MINUTES

1. Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of City of Steinbach Council held on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at City of Steinbach Council Chambers.

2. Mayor Earl Funk called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., with the following members of Council present: Councillors Jake Hiebert, Michael Zwaagstra, Bill Hiebert, Jac Siemens, Susan Penner & Damian Penner. Also present: City Manager, Troy Warkentin, Manager, Corporate Services, Adam Thiessen, City Planner, Lacey Gaudet and City Clerk, Amanda Dubois.

3. Councillor Bill Hiebert opened the meeting.

R25-067 4. Councillor J. Hiebert, Councillor D. Penner RESOLVED that the agenda be adopted.

-Un. Carried-

R25-068 5. Councillor B. Hiebert, Councillor J. Siemens RESOLVED that the minutes of March 18, 2025, Regular Council Meeting be approved.

-Un. Carried-

6. Council meeting recessed and Public Hearing was called to order at 7:36 p.m., by Mayor Earl Funk. Public Hearing was to consider By-law 2244 being the City of Steinbach Official Community Plan.

By-Law 2244

City of Steinbach - Official Community Plan (OCP)

Purpose: To complete the periodic review and update the City of Steinbach Official Community Plan (OCP). The Provincial Planning Act requires a review of the OCP every five years.

6.1 Lacey Gaudet, City Planner introduced By-Law 2244 and reported that notices pursuant to The Planning Act had been completed.

6.2 3 items of correspondence had been received objecting to the Official Community Plan.

6.3 Written correspondence has been received from Manitoba Municipal Relations - Community Planning Branch regarding By-Law 2244.

6.4 Kari Schulz, Senior Land Use Planner for WSP, the consultant, retained to aid in the development of the Official Community Plan by the City of Steinbach was present at the hearing and provided the following:

- an overview of the project timeline and explained the public engagement process, detailing how community input was gathered and incorporated throughout the development of the plan.
- discussed the provincial planning framework, explaining why it was updated and how the changes influenced the current planning process.
- explained Steinbach's vision and the planning principles.
- highlighted land use designations, major mapping changes and major text changes.
- a summary of the planning report and outlined the next steps in the process, including anticipated public hearings, final council review, and adoption timeline.

6.5 Ms. Schulz was prepared to answer questions of council.

6.6 Leona Doerksen, residing in the RM of La Broquerie was present at the public hearing to ask when By-Law 2245 for the emergency shelter was first introduced in the Official Community Plan.

6.7 Ms. Schulz returned to the podium to clarify that there are two separate by-laws. The Official Community Plan is a long-term, high-level planning document that guides development over a span of 25 to 30 years. By-law 2245 is a separate document that falls under the framework of the OCP. The Zoning By-law serves as a regulatory tool to help implement the OCP by establishing specific land use regulations, including permitted uses.

6.8 Arthur Adair of 251 Stone Bridge Crossing was present at the public hearing. He asked where the notice regarding the Official Community Plan was posted online and questioned how many ordinary residents are aware of it or know where to find such information.

6.9 Ms. Schulz returned to the podium to confirm that all legislative requirements have been adhered to and all documents are available online.

6.10 Ronald James, of the House of Klippenstein, residing on Avondale Crescent in Steinbach, was present at the public hearing and voiced his objection. He expressed concern that recent initiatives, including (DEI), (SOGI123), as well as global organizations such as the World Economic Forum (WEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations (UN) were being imposed upon the community without adequate public input.

- Mr. James stated that public schools and healthcare systems have strayed from their original purposes, suggesting that these institutions are now contributing to harm rather than care. He raised concerns about Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), food safety, and the potential impact of biotechnology such as mRNA and DNA modifications on the food supply.

- He asked several direct questions of Council, including whether the Mayor was a Freemason, if he serves as a “global mayor, whether he has taken a public oath of office and if all members of Council understand that they serve by the consent of the public and are under full liability for any breach or dereliction of duty.

- He emphasized the importance of Council being held accountable by the public and stated his belief that the agenda of Council should focus solely on local needs, specifically housing, health, roads, sewer, and the well-being of the residents of Steinbach.

- Mr. James questioned whether any members of Council had read the Official Community Plan and the Zoning By-law in full. He concluded by thanking Council for serving the residents but warned that if their duties are not upheld, members of the public will return to hold them accountable.

6.11 Mayor Funk requested clarification by Mr. Ronald James of the House of Klippenstein.

6.12 Mr. Ronald James of the House of Klippenstein returned to the podium and stated that he objected and that he wasn't required to say anything further.

6.13 Angela Bernadette, of the House of Isaac, residing in Steinbach, was present at the council meeting and requested clarification from Mayor Funk regarding a news report she had heard last year. The report referenced a proposal to relocate downtown parking to the rear of commercial buildings on Main Street and to convert the existing parking lane into a cyclist lane to improve safety for cyclists. Ms. Bernadette questioned the feasibility of this plan, particularly during the winter months, and asked about the timeline for its implementation. She also raised concerns about accessibility for seniors and how such changes might affect their mobility. In addition, she noted that many downtown businesses do not have sufficient parking for their staff, let alone for customers. Ms. Bernadette stated that she was not aware of any previous meetings regarding this matter and expressed her objection to the proposal.

6.14 Mayor Funk clarified that the proposed changes would apply specifically to new development on Main Street, not for existing buildings. As development occurs, new buildings would be constructed closer to the sidewalk, with parking relocated to the rear of the properties. He acknowledged that the City would like to encourage active transportation, including cycling, but noted that there are significant challenges involved. He explained that designated bike lanes have proven difficult to implement effectively in the downtown area, but that shared road use between vehicles and cyclists has the potential to be a more workable solution.

7. There being no further discussion, Council meeting re-opened at 8:17 p.m.

R25-069 8. Councillor J. Siemens, Councillor M. Zwaagstra RESOLVED that the City of Steinbach give first reading to By-Law 2244, being the Official Community Plan by-law.

-Un. Carried-

R25-070 9. Councillor J. Hiebert, Councillor B. Hiebert RESOLVED that the City of Steinbach give second reading to By-Law 2244, being the Official Community Plan by-law.

-Un. Carried-

10. Council meeting recessed and Public Hearing was called to order at 8:25 p.m., by Mayor Earl Funk. Public Hearing was to consider By-law 2245 being the City of Steinbach Zoning By-Law.

By-Law 2245

City of Steinbach - Zoning By-Law

Purpose: A variety of updates to the City of Steinbach Zoning By-Law have been proposed resulting from a detailed review and consideration of the City's land use policies.

10.1 Lacey Gaudet, City Planner introduced By-Law 2245 and reported that notices pursuant to The Planning Act had been completed.

10.2 Several items of correspondence had been received in support of and in objection to the Zoning By-Law.

10.3 Written correspondence has been received from Manitoba Municipal Relations - Community Planning Branch regarding By-Law 2245.

10.4 Two recommended revisions not currently in the draft document are as follows:

1. A revision to change "Personal Services" to a Conditional Use within the "M1" Light Industrial Zone and "M-MX" Industrial Mixed Use Zone.

2. A revision to add "Body Modification" as a Conditional Use within the "M1" Light Industrial Zone and the "M-MX" Industrial Mixed Use Zone.

Recommendation to give first and second reading to By-Law 2245, as amended, being the zoning by-law, and to repeal Zoning By-Law 2100.

10.5 Kari Schulz, Senior Land Use Planner for WSP, the consultant, retained to aid in the development of the Zoning By-Law by the City of Steinbach was present at the hearing and provided the following:

- an overview of the project timeline and explained the public engagement process, detailing how community input was gathered and incorporated throughout the development of the plan.
- discussed the provincial planning framework, explaining why it was updated and how the changes influenced the current planning process.
- highlighted major mapping changes and major text changes.
- a summary of the planning report and outlined the next steps in the process, including anticipated public hearings, final council review, and adoption timeline.

10.6 Ms. Schulz was prepared to answer questions of council.

11. Brad Unger, of 48 Brookdale Crescent, was present at the public hearing and expressed his appreciation for council's efforts in reviewing the zoning by-law and recognizing the importance of preserving existing neighborhoods. He shared that, as a former board member of the Inn, he had the opportunity to hear concerns from both residents and business leaders, offering valuable insight into how deeply these issues matter to many in the community.

12. Mayor Funk clarified that the public hearing is for the Zoning By-Law, with many changes that also include a proposed change from permitted use to a conditional use for an emergency shelter. This hearing is not for specific proposed projects.

13. Leona Doerksen, a resident of the RM of La Broquerie and a representative of the board for The INN, a transitional housing project proposed for 447 Main Street, was present at public hearing. She inquired when emergency residential shelter was added as a permitted use in the Zoning By-Law, noting that when the property was purchased, the board understood it to be within the correct zoning designation. Ms. Doerksen also directed a question to Senior Land Use Planner Kari Schulz, asking whether it was her firm's recommendation that emergency residential shelter remain as a permitted use under the proposed Zoning By-Law.

14. Ms. Gaudet explained that the current Zoning By-Law includes a definition for emergency residential shelters. The updated Zoning By-Law has amended and expanded the definition and added it as a specific use, within table 10.1.

15. Ms. Shultz returned to the podium and confirmed that a recommendation was made to maintain it as permitted use. Council has the authority to accept or decline any recommendation and clarified that the use has not been eliminated, but as a conditional use allows council an opportunity to review through the public hearing process.

16. Ms. Doerksen returned to the podium and provided the following comments:

- the INN had not been included in the early discussions surrounding the Zoning By-Law changes and, as a result, did not have an opportunity to participate or address questions and concerns from the public or council.

- the board had been transparent and proactive, publishing information on their website and conducting two door-to-door outreach efforts in the community. She assured the public that safety has been a primary consideration, noting that the board had carefully selected the property at 447 Main Street.

- clarified that The INN aligns with the definition of “transitional housing” as recognized by the City of Winnipeg, the Government of Manitoba, and the Government of Canada. By shifting their model from emergency residential shelter to transitional housing, Ms. Doerksen asserted they are now offering a safer and more sustainable service.

- confirmed that the proposed project will be a residential social service, not an emergency shelter.

- trust that the City will recognize them for who they are and what they can offer, and must publicly oppose proposed residential emergency shelter by-law 2245 and the conditional use permit attached to it.

17. Ms. Gaudet noted that the proposed change to the Zoning By-Law is adding “emergency residential shelter” as a conditional use within a specific use table. It is not site-specific to particular uses on what they are defined to and is not specific to a particular project. Transitional housing is not defined in the current or proposed zoning by-law.

18. Ronald James, residing in Steinbach near Avondale was present at the public hearing requesting clarification regarding private wells and public water systems.

19. Ms. Gaudet clarified that the policy being referred to was part of the Official Community Plan By-Law 2244, not Zoning By-Law 2245.

20. Mr. James continued, speaking regarding item 8.1.6, the keeping of animals in the proposed by-law and voiced objections, expressing concern over what he described as excessive regulations, arguing that increased regulations lead to lower food quality and higher costs for the public. Mr. James emphasized the importance of promoting private gardens and animals as a way to support food security and address hunger and homelessness. He reiterated his objection to the volume of regulations, expressing concern about the general attitude toward private business and how that affects efforts to help the hungry and homeless. He urged council to remove or reduce regulations.

21. Tony Clark of 18 Rams Gate was present at the public hearing to object and voiced concerns. He asked for clarification regarding the number of objections required and regarding the conditional use, how does the City plan to protect applicants from potential discrimination.

22. Nathan Penner of St. Malo, Manitoba was present at the public hearing questioning if council had a homelessness strategy and what happens if transitional housing doesn’t have a fit within the zoning by-law and questioned what the implications would be if transitional housing is not accommodated within the Zoning By-Law.

23. Lisa Clark, of 18 Rams Gate, was present at the public hearing and voiced her objection to the proposed by-law. She expressed concerns about discrimination and referenced both provincial and federal precedents that prohibit discrimination. Ms. Clark agreed that encampments are not an ideal solution but opposed allowing any space at the council level for discrimination against vulnerable groups. She emphasized that these individuals deserve the right to shelter and should be protected from discriminatory practices.

24. Christine Gerbrandt of Castle Rock Cove objected and submitted a written objection.

25. Korine Unger of 48 Brookdale Crescent was present at the public hearing and spoke in support of the by-law. She expressed the belief that everyone, including her children, have the right to feel safe and participate by voicing their concern or support as part of the decision making process.
26. Tina Barkman, of Blumenort, Manitoba was present at the public hearing and voiced her objection to the proposed by-law. She expressed concern about the need for additional zoning and questioned why more zones are necessary. It appeared that the by-law would lead to more fences, higher walls, and increased exclusion, which she believes would create more restriction, division, and disunity in the community. She emphasized that instead of dividing the community, the focus should be on efforts to unite it.
27. Brian Bartel, of the RM of Hanover was present at the public hearing and spoke in favor of the by-law. He expressed the belief that open dialogue and community-based processes for addressing issues are both healthy and necessary.
28. Ms. Schulz returned to the podium to clarify that under the legislation for objections not filed by the close of public hearing, you will not be notified of the opportunity to further object.
29. There being no further discussion, Council meeting re-opened at 9:23 p.m.
- R25-071 30. Councillor S. Penner, Councillor D. Penner RESOLVED that the City of Steinbach give first reading to By-Law 2245 as amended, being the Zoning By-Law.  
-Un. Carried-
- R25-072 31. Councillor J. Siemens, Councillor J. Hiebert RESOLVED that the City of Steinbach give second reading to By-Law 2245 as amended, being the Zoning By-Law.  
-Un. Carried-
- R25-073 32. Councillor D. Penner, Councillor J. Hiebert RESOLVED that the following accounts be approved for payment:
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| Accounts Payable (March 26, 2025)            | \$ | 436,959.37 |
| Bi-Weekly Pay Period No. 07 (March 25, 2025) | \$ | 300,253.40 |
- Un. Carried-
- R25-074 33. Councillor J. Siemens, Councillor M. Zwaagstra RESOLVED that the City of Steinbach give first reading to By-Law 2262, being a rezoning by-law.  
-Un. Carried-
- R25-075 34. Councillor B. Hiebert, Councillor M. Zwaagstra RESOLVED that the City of Steinbach accept the following approved excavator’s licence as issued by the Operations Department.
- Lic. No. 25-16 - Seine River Telecom - Lawrence Templeton - Sewer /Water/Utilities  
-Un. Carried-
- R25-076 35. Councillor D. Penner, Councillor M. Zwaagstra
- WHEREAS Section 11(1) of *The Noxious Weeds Act* requires that Council appoint by resolution, a “municipal noxious weeds inspector”;  
BE IT RESOLVED that Grant Ryland, Community Services Officer, be appointed as City of Steinbach Weed Inspector for 2025.  
-Un. Carried-
36. Minutes of the Eastman Regional Municipal Committee South Sub-Committee of March 10, 2025 were acknowledged.  
Received as information.

- 37. Minutes of the Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District of February 18, 2025, February 19, 2025, February 28, 2025, March 4, 2025 and March 5, 2025 were acknowledged.  
Received as information.
- 38. Correspondence from the Minister of Public Safety in response to the letter sent on January 10, 2025 were acknowledged.  
Received as information.
- 39. Correspondence and a request for Sponsorship from the Steinbach Bible College were acknowledged.  
Received as information.
- 40. Councillor B. Hiebert, Councillor J. Siemens RESOLVED that the meeting be adjourned.

-Un. Carried-

Time of adjournment: 9:46 p.m.

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Mayor

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City Manager