



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Request for a Natural Garden Exemption to the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 489 - Grass and Weeds at 315 Ashdale Avenue

Date:	September 9, 2008
To:	Toronto East York Community Council
From:	Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, Toronto East York District
Wards:	Ward 30 – Toronto-Danforth
Reference Number:	IBMS No. 07-263000

SUMMARY

This staff report is about a matter for which the Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision. The applicant, being the property owner is seeking exemption to the provisions of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 489 Grass and Weeds, Section 489-3(e) on the basis that the growth is exempt as a natural garden.

The Grass and Weeds By-law provides that the owner or occupant of private land shall cut the grass and weeds on their land and remove the cuttings whenever the growth of grass and weeds exceeds 20 centimetres in height. The subject property has plant growth in excess of 20 centimetres in the front and rear yard areas for which the owner has applied for relief to be exempted as a natural garden.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Municipal Licensing & Standards recommends that the Toronto East York Community Council grant the exemption, with or without conditions.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact anticipated in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The Municipal Licensing and Standard Division received an application for an exemption from the Grass and Weeds By-law to permit plant material to remain at a height in excess of 20 centimetres by exempting the growth as a natural garden.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In response to a Notice of Violation issued for Long Grass and Weeds the property owner submitted a letter dated October 31, 2007 requesting that a review be conducted with a view to designating the front and rear yard areas as natural gardens. The time of year did not allow a proper assessment of the plant material which was present in the yard areas and the matter was held in abeyance until the spring of 2008.

In May of 2008 the location was attended by a City of Toronto, Natural Resource Specialist, who confirmed that the plant growth qualified to be exempted as a natural garden.

COMMENTS

The City of Toronto Council enacted the amalgamated By-Law 255-2004 on April 16, 2004 to prescribe the maximum height permitted for long grass and weed growth. This By-Law and the amendments are now found in the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 489 – Grass and Weeds. The by-law further provides that the owner or occupant upon receipt of notice under this section may request that the issuance of the notice be reviewed by community council on the basis that the growth is exempt as a natural garden.

The By-law provides that a “natural garden” has been deliberately implemented to produce ground cover, including one or more species of wildflowers, shrubs, perennials, grasses or combinations of them whether native or non-native, consistent with a managed and natural landscape other than regularly mown grass.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Elizabeth Glibbery, Manager
Toronto East York District

ATTACHMENTS

1. Photograph of the front yard
2. Photograph of the rear yard