

46 Hunting Ridge – Private Tree Removal

Date:	November 23, 2009
To:	Etobicoke York Community Council
From:	Richard Ubbens, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 4 - Etobicoke-Centre
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The report requests City Council's authority to deny the request to remove a privately-owned tree, located in the rear yard of 46 Hunting Ridge. The property owner is concerned that this tree may fall and cause damage to persons or property.

An inspection of the tree by staff revealed that the tree is in fair to good condition. The owner is of the opinion that this tree's lean toward the house poses a hazard to people and property. With proper care and maintenance, the tree should continue to provide benefits to the community for years to come. Urban Forestry cannot support the removal of an existing healthy tree when maintenance options exist that would allow it to be retained in a healthy state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree at 46 Hunting Ridge.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In accordance with *City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, an application has been made requesting permission to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located in the rear yard of 46 Hunting Ridge.

The property owner is concerned that the tree is leaning toward the house and that it may represent a potential hazard to people and property. A recent lightning strike in the community required the attendance of the fire department and has heightened the applicant's concerns surrounding this tree.

COMMENTS

An application for a destruction permit was received on May 20, 2009 from the tenant of 46 Hunting Ridge, requesting permission to remove one privately-owned, 61-centimetre diameter White pine (*Pinus strobus*) tree. The tree is located between the house and the pool, two (2) metres from the east side of the building's foundation.

Urban Forestry staff have inspected the subject tree and found it to be in fair to good condition. The tree is structurally sound with no signs of any significant decay, pests or diseases. White pine is Ontario's provincial tree and is part of a large majestic community of trees that contribute to the character of this neighbourhood.

The tree is situated in the rear yard of the subject property and contributes shade to the property and improves the landscape view in the area. The property owner has expressed a concern that this tree has dead branches, is leaning toward the house and is a potential hazard to people and property. Urban Forestry recommends the elimination of deadwood and elevation of the tree's crown, as the only tree maintenance required to alleviate the owner's concerns. The lean of the main stem is insignificant and not a concern in the opinion of staff.

The property owner is proposing to plant one (1) little-leaf linden or ginkgo tree to replace the tree in question, should permission to remove the tree in question be granted.

As required under *Section 813-17, of City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, a 'Notice' of Application sign was posted on the subject property for the minimum 14 days. The posting serves to notify the community and provide an opportunity for objection to the application. One (1) letter of objection and two (2) letters supporting the application were received in response to the posting.

The subject tree is a significant and valuable part of the urban forest community that exists within this neighbourhood. With proper care and maintenance, the tree should continue to provide benefits to the property and the community for many years to come.

Urban Forestry cannot support removal of this tree due to its viable condition and contribution to the Urban Forest.

CONTACT

Max Dida, Assistant Planner, Urban Forestry, Tel: 416-394-8918, Fax: 416-394-5406,
Email: mdida@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Richard Ubbens, RPF
Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Photographs of White pine tree
Attachment 2 - Letter of Objection and Letters of Support

AttachmentNo.1–PhotographsofWhitepinetree





Staff report for action on
a private tree removal for 46 Hunting Ridge

46 Hunting Ridge



Attachment 2 - Letters of Objection and Letters of Support

06/06/09 SAT 17:45

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To: Urban Forestry
441 Kipling Ave.
Fax: (416) 394-5406
Attention: Max Dida
deadline: June 6/09

Re: 46 Hunting Ridge
removal of mature white pine

It would definitely be a loss to see a beautiful, mature white pine cut down. The loss is worsened by the fact that very few white pines exist in this neighbourhood. I look at that tree almost every time i walk along Hunting Ridge. By what words can i properly express the value of that tree?

Do the owners of 46 Hunting Ridge have good reasons for asking that the tree be removed? Does the city agree? I only ask that the city do due diligence with respect to the tree and ^{the} decision to refuse/grant permission to the owners of 46 Hunting Ridge. Once the tree is gone, it is gone forever. And since no one (that i know of) is planting young white pines in this neighbourhood, there will be no eventual replacement for this tree in the landscape of this neighbourhood.

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>>> "Bonk, Lorraine (Fr John Redmond)" <lorraine.bonk@tcdsb.org> 11/19/2009 9:12 AM >>>

Hello Mr. Dida,

I am Lorraine Bonk, daughter of Mrs Eleanor Cosentino, who is neighbour to the Vyte's. It is my understanding that the Vyte's have made a plea for the removal of the enormous pine tree that is in their backyard at 46 Hunting Ridge. We have been very worried about that tree since we moved into the house 16 years ago, and had asked the original neighbours to have it cut down. My father, who is now deceased, worried about storms knocking some of the limbs down and injuring us while we were in the house. If that tree fell it would do great damage to the house and may cause casualties to the people now living in it. As my mother nears her 91st birthday, we are also concerned about the worry that it causes her. If her health were to fail and we needed to seek around the clock care for her in a retirement facility, the house would have to be sold. Once again there is concern that the danger the tree represents, could affect the value of her home, and therefore the care that would be available to her. Please consider our concerns in this matter.

Yours truly,

Lorraine Bonk
Religion Department Head @ Father John Redmond C.S.S.

November 12, 2009

Max Dida
Assistant Planner
Urban Forestry
City of Toronto

Dear Mr. Dida

I am writing this letter to express my concern about the White Pine on the north side of 46 Hunting Ridge. As the tenant I feel that there are several valid reasons for the removal of the tree.

First and foremost is the safety issue. Limbs have already fallen from the tree and fortunately have caused no personal or property damage. However, this may not have been the case if one of my children, or their friends had been in the backyard. It is also my understanding that if there is any form of damage the City of Toronto will not be held liable. This is unwarranted and unfair since the City has thus far not permitted the said tree to be removed.

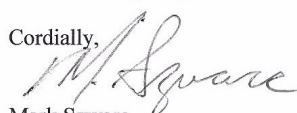
Secondly, the tree leans worrisomely into and over the house. It is only a few feet from the building. It is possible that in the event of a severe storm (a common occurrence the last few years) the tree (or parts of) could fall into or onto the house and cause major structural damage. To deny that this is possible is both foolhardy and testimony to a serious lack of judgment.

Thirdly, as a resident of 46 Hunting Ridge, I am not able to use the fireplace since the White Pine leans directly over the chimney. I have a beautiful stone-faced fireplace that cannot be lit, since to do so, would be a fire hazard and would ignite the White Pine.

Lastly, the tree itself is not aesthetically pleasing. It has over the years been continuously trimmed. Only the upper portion has branching. If it was to be trimmed even further it would be visually similar to a toilet bowl scrubber.

It is my hope that the City of Toronto Urban Forestry officials will reexamine their decision and grant permission for the removal of the tree.

Cordially,



Mark Szwarc
46 Hunting Ridge
Toronto, ON
(416) 231-8840