

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 22 Boxwood Road

Date: May 28, 2019

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 2 Etobicoke Centre

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 22 Boxwood Road. The application indicates the reasons for removal are to address concerns associated with falling branches and the tree being too close to the dwelling located on the property.

The subject tree is a sugar maple tree (*Acer saccharum*), measuring 57cm in diameter. The Private Tree By-law does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned sugar maple tree located at 22 Boxwood Road.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

There is no history regarding this tree removal permit application.

COMMENTS

Urban Forestry received an application to remove one (1) privately owned tree located in the rear yard of 22 Boxwood Road. The subject tree is a sugar maple measuring 57 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns of falling branches and the associated hazard within close proximity to the dwelling.

The arborist report that accompanied the application indicates that the tree is in good condition. It also states that the sugar maple tree is showing signs of decline and has a history of falling branches. Due to increasing die back and close proximity to the dwelling the homeowner wants to remove the tree and replace it with another tree further from the house.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it was healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally at the time of inspection. The issue presented regarding falling branches can be addressed through arboricultural treatments such as pruning. This tree is situated 1.8 meter from the dwelling at 22 Boxwood Road. No evidence of the tree impacting the dwelling was observed at the time of inspection and the tree is located such that routine tree maintenance can be performed.

All trees pose some risk of limb failure however the performance of routine tree maintenance will reduce the likelihood of this occurrence. Routine tree maintenance is considered part of performing routine property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners within the City of Toronto.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws including the *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Article III*, more commonly referred to as the Private Tree By-law. The Private Tree By-law does not have a mechanism that would allow the removal of the subject tree based on the concerns stated in the tree removal permit application.

As required under Section 813-19, 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-day period in order to provide an opportunity for comment by the community. Five (5) letters were received in response to the posting supporting removal of the tree.

A permit to remove the tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The owner is appealing this decision. Should City Council approve this request for tree removal, in accordance with *Section 813-20 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, permit approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the property owner is proposing to plant one (1) tulip tree. However, in this instance, it would be appropriate for the owner to provide five (5) replacement trees, which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting.

Trees improve the quality of urban life and contribute greatly to our sense of community. They are aesthetically pleasing and soften the hard lines of built form and surfaces in an urban setting. Trees contribute to the overall character and quality of neighbourhoods. Studies suggest that social benefits such as crime reduction and neighbourhood cohesion can be attributed to the presence of trees.

The environmental benefits of trees include cleansing of air, noise and wind reduction, and protection from ultraviolet radiation. Trees reduce rainwater runoff thereby reducing soil erosion and lowering storm water management costs. They also contribute to moderation of temperature extremes and reduction of the urban heat island effect by providing shade during summer.

Trees provide many economic benefits including the enhancement of property values. Homes with mature trees have higher value when compared to similar types of homes in similar locations without trees. Mature trees are associated with reduced home energy consumption. Air conditioning costs are lower in a home shaded by trees and heating costs are reduced when trees mitigate the cooling effects of wind in winter. Trees are a community resource, which can make the city more attractive to investors, tourists and prospective residents thus contributing to growth and prosperity.

It is the goal of the City of Toronto to increase the city's tree canopy to 40 per cent. The loss of trees in the city due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, compounded with additional tree loss due to the presence of the Asian longhorned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The sugar maple tree located at 22 Boxwood Road is a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance this tree has the potential to provide the property owner and the surrounding community with benefits for many more years. In accordance with the City Council-approved Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan and the Private Tree By-law, this tree should not be removed.

CONTACT

Max Dida, Supervisor, Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-394-8551, Email: Max.Dida@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Photographs of the sugar maple tree measuring 57 cm in diameter



