TORONTO

REPORT FOR ACTION

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 633 Glengrove Avenue

Date: October 28, 2020
To: North York Community Council
From: Director, Urban Forestry, Park, Forestry and Recreation
Wards: Ward 8 - Eglinton-Lawrence

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 633 Glengrove Avenue. The application indicates the reason for removal is to allow for the property owner to plant and tend a garden for health reasons.

The subject tree is a black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) measuring 82 cm in diameter. The 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 privately owned tree located at 633 Glengrove Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history regarding this tree removal permit application

COMMENTS

Urban Forestry received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 633 Glengrove Avenue. The subject tree is a black walnut measuring 82 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to allow for the property owner to plant and tend a garden for health reasons.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable.

Black walnut trees produce a chemical called juglone that improves their chances of survival by reducing competition with other plant species. Some plants are sensitive to juglone and will not survive growing in close proximity to black walnut trees. Removing the black walnut tree from the prospective garden area will not address the problem as juglone toxicity may persist in the soil for several years as the black walnut roots decay.

Some options for reducing exposure of juglone to sensitive plants can be achieved by: collecting fallen leaves and nuts, thereby reducing accumulation and decomposition into the soil; adding organic matter; aerating the soil and raising garden beds beneath the canopy of black walnut trees. In addition, pruning the tree for enhanced light penetration through and below the canopy, choosing crops that do not require full sun, and considering container gardening as an alternative to traditional gardens would all be ways to retain the tree and also have a garden.

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. No comments were received in response to the posting.

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 issuance must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the applicant is proposing to plant one replacement tree. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide five 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 help to 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 the 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 black walnut tree at 633 Glengrove Avenue 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 Tree By-law, this tree should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of black walnut tree at 633 Glengrove Avenue; August 18, 2020

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