161 Roxborough Drive – Application to Remove a Private Tree

**Date:** November 28, 2013
**To:** Toronto and East York Community Council
**From:** Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
**Ward:** Ward 27 – Toronto Centre - Rosedale
**Reference Number:** P:\2014\Cluster A\PFR\TE29-011514-AFS#18737

**SUMMARY**

This report recommends that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree. The application indicates the reason for removal is that the tree has poor structure and is poorly located.

The subject tree is a red oak (*Quercus rubra*) measuring 73 cm in diameter, located in the rear yard of the property. The tree is healthy and in fair condition; therefore, Urban Forestry cannot support removal of this tree.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove the privately owned red oak tree at 161 Roxborough Drive.

**Financial Impact**

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

**COMMENTS**

An application was received from the owner of 161 Roxborough Drive for a permit to remove a 73 cm diameter privately owned red oak tree located in the rear yard of the subject property. The application indicates the reason for removal is that the tree has
poor structure and is poorly located. The property owner wishes to remove this tree because of its close proximity to the house and weight of the canopy towards the home.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and found that it is healthy and in fair condition structurally and botanically. There is minor dead wood within the canopy but no obvious signs of decay, cavities, or structural weaknesses. The tree is more than 0.5 m from the existing porch and there are no visible signs of interaction between the porch and the tree. The canopy of the tree is reduced on the north-east side due to the presence of a twin-stemmed red oak tree with stems measuring 52 cm and 74 cm in diameter.

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. One (1) objection letter was received in response to the notice.

A permit to remove the tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The owner is appealing the decision to deny the permit.

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, approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the arborist report suggests planting three (3) 50 mm caliper trees – a red maple (Acer rubrum), American beech (Fagus grandifolia), and Kentucky coffee tree (Gymnocladus dioicus). However, the Kentucky coffee tree is proposed to be planted in the location of the existing twin-stemmed red oak tree that is to remain. The conflicting location would need to be rectified. In this instance, it would be appropriate to require the owner to provide ten (10) replacement trees, in a combination of planting and cash in lieu. If the application is approved, a revised replanting plan is required to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

Toronto's Official Plan policy 3.4.1 supports the preservation of significant trees, citing their many benefits:

(1) To support strong communities, a competitive economy and a high quality of life, public and private city-building activities and changes to the built environment, including public works, will be environmentally friendly, based on:

   (d) preserving and enhancing the urban forest by:

      (i) providing suitable growing environments for trees;

      (ii) increasing tree canopy coverage and diversity, especially of long-lived native and large shade trees; and

      (iii) regulating the injury and destruction of trees.
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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 directly attributable 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 break the winter cooling effects of wind.

Trees are a community resource, which can make the city more attractive to investors, tourists and prospective residents, thus contributing to growth and prosperity.

The red oak tree at 161 Roxborough Drive is significant and 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 years to come. Urban Forestry, therefore, cannot support removal of this tree.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Jason Doyle
Director of Urban Forestry

ATTACHMENT

Attachments 1-2 – Photos of the 73 cm diameter red oak tree situated in the rear yard of 161 Roxborough Drive.
Attachment 1

73 cm diameter red oak tree, the subject of this application.

Twin-stemmed red oak tree, 52 cm and 74 cm in diameter. This tree is not included in the application.
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