TORONTO

REPORT FOR ACTION

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 10 Stuart Avenue

Date: February 3, 2017
To: North York Community Council
From: Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division
Wards: Ward 23 – Willowdale

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 10 Stuart Avenue. The application indicates the reasons for removal include dripping sap and damage to an adjacent garage and driveway.

The subject tree is a white spruce tree (*Picea glauca*) measuring 46 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support 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 tree located at 10 Stuart 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 (1) privately-owned tree situated in the front yard of 10 Stuart Avenue. The subject tree is a white spruce measuring 46 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns regarding dripping sap and damage to the garage and driveway caused by the tree roots.

The arborist report that accompanied the application indicates that the tree is in good condition but is located too close to a nearby driveway and garage foundation. The report further indicates that the tree is exhibiting signs of very early stages of cytospora canker. No evidence supporting damage to the garage and driveway was provided in the report.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined it is healthy and maintainable. The tree is located 0.4 m from the garage and 0.4 m from the driveway. One anchor root was observed on the surface in close proximity to the existing driveway. No damage to the driveway or house was observed at the time of the inspection. The tree is exhibiting the early signs of cytospora canker, however this has not impacted its health or vigor. Although tree branches may dieback as an effect of cytospora canker trees, seldom die because of the disease. Trees with cytospora canker can survive in a healthy and maintainable condition for many years.

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. During the posting period, Urban Forestry did not receive any comments in response to the Notice.

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

Following the permit denial the property owner submitted additional information and photographs for consideration by Urban Forestry. The information indicates the westerly wall of the garage was severely cracked and new stucco was applied as a remedial measure. The property owner also indicated that the tree exudes and drops sap onto their vehicles.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the force required to lift or crack properly constructed and maintained foundations walls or asphalt driveways. They are however, capable of growing into any available space that offers water and air. However, if proper drainage has not been provided, heaving may occur as a result of freezing and thawing creating space that tree roots may grow into. Roots do not and cannot go where there is no water. Waterproofing of the foundation, if not already done, would prevent roots from growing in any existing cracks or other openings in the

foundation. Damage such as that described here can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and bylaws including *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 support tree removal to address the nuisance resulting from a tree's natural functions, including dripping sap. Concerns expressed by the applicant in this regard can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and routine tree maintenance.

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 applicant is proposing to plant one (1) replacement 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 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 white spruce tree at 10 Stuart 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. Urban Forestry, therefore, does not support removal of this tree.

CONTACT

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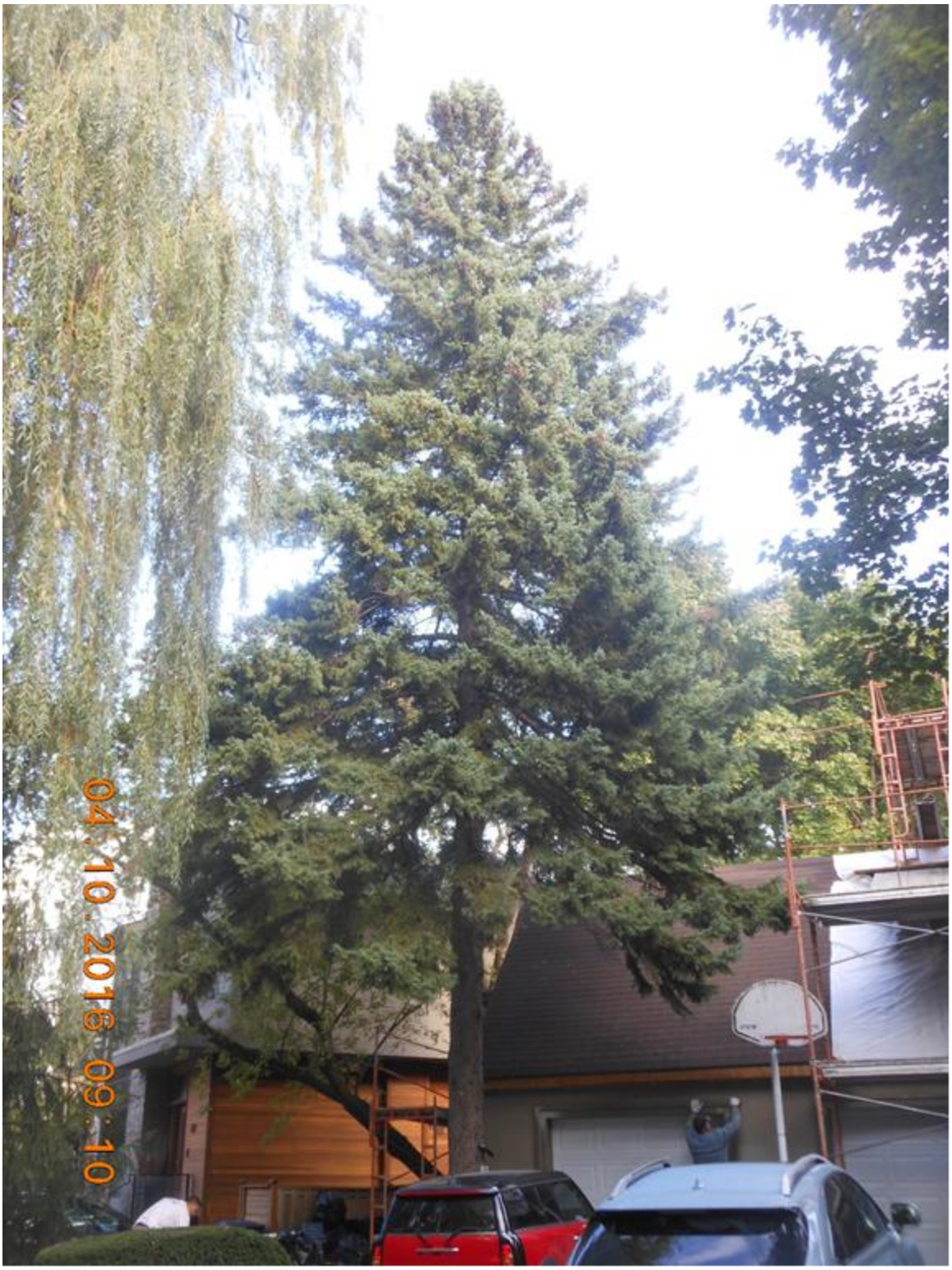
SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the subject tree in the front yard of 10 Stuart Avenue
Attachment 2 – Photograph of the lower portion of the subject tree (provided by property owner)

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the subject tree in the front yard of 10 Stuart Avenue



Attachment 2 – Photograph of the lower subject tree

