

Application to Remove Two Private Trees - 50 Wexford Boulevard

Date: August 11, 2017

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 37 - Scarborough Centre

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove two (2) privately owned trees located at 50 Wexford Boulevard. The application indicates the reason for removal is to address concerns over the trees' proximity to the dwelling, cars, electrical lines, and people located at 50 Wexford Boulevard.

The subject trees are two (2) honey locust trees (*Gleditsia trianthos*), measuring 62 cm and 76 cm in diameter. The Private Tree By-law does not support the removal of these two (2) trees as they are 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 two (2) privately owned trees located at 50 Wexford Boulevard.

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 two (2) privately owned trees located in the front yard of 50 Wexford Boulevard. The subject trees are honey

locusts measuring 62 cm and 76 cm in diameter. The request to remove these trees indicates the reason for removal is to address concerns over the trees' proximity to the dwelling, cars, electrical lines, and people located at 50 Wexford Boulevard.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed these trees to be in fair to poor condition. The arborist report indicates the trees to be in decline with the following conditions: water sprouts, deadwood throughout, small growth increments, hangers, fungi, and many stubs. The trees are located above and beside potential targets (cars and electrical lines). The arborist report also stated that the trees are found to be mature, and possibly over mature.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the trees and determined that they are healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. Any above-ground structural concerns such as removal of deadwood or conflicts with overhead electrical lines can be addressed through routine inspection and pruning and maintenance in accordance with good arboricultural practices. Doing so will also reduce the likelihood of future limb failure. All trees, even healthy trees, will pose some risk of limb failure during inclement weather events.

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, Trees, 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 trees 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 trees 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 two (2) replacement trees. However in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide ten (10) 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 honey locust trees located at 50 Wexford Boulevard are a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance these trees have 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, these trees should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Photograph showing honey locust tree measuring 62 cm in diameter in proximity to electrical lines. All branches were pruned away from electrical lines.

Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Photograph showing the broken and hanging branches from the honey locust tree measuring 62 cm in diameter. Broken and hanging branches can be removed using proper arboricultural practices.

Attachment 3 - Figure 3: Photograph showing honey locust tree measuring 76 cm in diameter in proximity to driveway, and car.

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Photograph showing honey locust tree measuring 62 cm in diameter in proximity to electrical lines. All branches were pruned away from electrical lines.



Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Photograph showing the hangers from the honey locust tree measuring 62 cm in diameter. Broken and hanging branches can be pruned using proper arboricultural practices.



Attachment 3 - Figure 3: Photograph showing honey locust tree measuring 76 cm in diameter in proximity to driveway, car, and house.

