

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 86 Conference Boulevard

Date: August 11, 2017

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 44 – Scarborough East

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 86 Conference Boulevard. The application indicates the reason for removal is due to concerns that the tree's branches are a hazard, overhanging the roof of the house, pool and shed located on the property.

The subject tree is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), measuring 76 cm 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 tree located at 86 Conference 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 one (1) privately owned tree located at the rear of 86 Conference Boulevard. The subject tree is a silver maple measuring 76 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made due to concerns that the tree's branches are a hazard, overhanging the roof of the house, pool and shed located on the property.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed the tree to be in poor structural condition with a multi-stem form with poor branch unions, included bark (bark that becomes embedded in a union between a branch and trunk and can cause the tree to have weak structure), hanging broken limbs, open branch wounds, branches overhanging the owner's roof, pool and shed, ten per cent deadwood in the crown and the presence of eastern box elder bugs (*Boisea trivittata*).

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. At the time of inspection the subject tree's branches and union appeared structurally healthy. Some broken branches were visible within the crown, however their removal can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance. Doing so will also reduce the likelihood of future limb failure.

Eastern box elder bugs are not a tree health concern because they feed primarily on seeds that have fallen from the tree. The bugs can be a nuisance when they enter buildings to hibernate for winter, but they do not damage structures. The entry of bugs into buildings can be prevented by filling gaps around windows and doors and using door and window screens.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws including *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 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 required 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 this 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 proposes to plant two (2) large growing shade trees in the backyard. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the

applicant 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 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 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 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 existing 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 silver maple tree at 86 Conference Boulevard 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

Mark Ventresca, Supervisor, Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry,
Tel: 416-396-5131, Email: Mark.Ventresca@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Photograph of silver maple tree measuring 76 cm in diameter in the rear yard of 86 Conference Boulevard, taken in March, 2017.

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