

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 42 Greypoint Drive

Date: August 11, 2017

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 42 – Scarborough-Rouge River

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 42 Greypoint Drive. The application did not indicate a reason for this tree's removal however the applicant later described their concerns over the tree's health, damage to the foundation caused by roots, racoons causing damage to roof structures and roof maintenance caused by falling needles.

The subject tree is a Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens*), measuring 42 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 42 Greypoint Drive.

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 in the front yard of the property located at 42 Greypoint Drive. The subject tree is a Colorado spruce tree measuring 42 cm in diameter. The application did not indicate a reason for this tree's removal however the applicant later described their concerns over the tree's health, damage to the foundation caused by roots, racoons causing damage to roof structures and roof maintenance caused by falling needles.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed the tree to be in poor structural condition due to a reduced crown which could cause the stem to fail during high winds thereby posing a hazard.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the force required to crack a properly constructed and maintained foundation wall. Roots are, however, capable of growing into any available space that offers water and air. Further, if proper drainage has not been provided, heaving may occur as a result of freezing and thawing creating space that roots may grow into. Roots do not and cannot go where there is no water. Waterproofing the foundation would prevent roots from growing into any existing cracks. Damage such as that described here can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal.

Any above ground structural concerns about the tree could be addressed through routine inspection and maintenance in accordance with good arboricultural practices. Staff noted that the branches of the tree had already been pruned to clear the roof of the house which should limit or prevent racoon access via the tree. Removal of debris such as leaf litter or other natural elements from the landscape, or from within eaves troughs and downspouts, is considered part of performing routine property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners within the City of Toronto.

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 arborist report or in the applicant's letter to Urban Forestry that was submitted subsequent to submission of 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 one (1) large growing shade tree 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 Colorado spruce tree at 42 Greypoint Drive 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 Colorado spruce tree measuring 42 cm in diameter in the front yard of 42 Greypoint Drive, taken in April, 2017.

Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Photograph of Colorado spruce tree measuring 42 cm in diameter in the front yard of 42 Greypoint Drive, taken in April, 2017.

Attachment 1 Figure 1: Photograph of Colorado spruce tree measuring 42 cm in diameter in the front yard of 42 Greypoint Drive, taken in April 2017.



Attachment 2 - Figure 2: TPRR staff photograph of Colorado spruce tree measuring 42 cm in diameter in the front yard of 42 Greypoint Drive, taken in April 2017.

