

## **Application to Remove Two Private Trees - 18 Longhouse Place**

**Date:** December 1, 2016

**To:** Scarborough Community Council

**From:** Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

**Wards:** Ward 38 – Scarborough Centre

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove two (2) privately-owned trees located at 18 Longhouse Place. An applicant on behalf of the owner of 18 Longhouse Place is requesting removal of the tree to address concerns that the trees are situated too close to an existing house causing damage to eaves, shingles and potentially the home's foundation, and that the trees are providing wildlife with access to the roof.

The subject trees are both Colorado spruce trees (*Picea pungens*) measuring 43.5 cm and 47 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support the removal of these trees as they are healthy and maintainable.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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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 18 Longhouse Place.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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

### **DECISION HISTORY**

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There is no decision history regarding this tree removal permit application.

## COMMENTS

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Urban Forestry received an application to remove two (2) privately-owned trees located at the front of the property at 18 Longhouse Place. The subject trees are both Colorado spruce trees measuring 43.5 cm and 47 cm in diameter. The request to remove these trees has been made to address the owner's concerns that the trees are situated too close to an existing house, resulting in the branches causing damage to the eaves and shingles and the tree's roots potentially causing damage to the foundation of the house; and that the trees are providing wildlife with access to the roof.

The arborist report that accompanied the application describes the trees to be in good condition.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the trees and determined that the trees are healthy and maintainable. Both trees have been pruned to clear the roof of the house. Maintenance of the trees, including continuation of pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices, will reduce the likelihood of damage occurring to the eaves and shingles and will alleviate issues with wildlife accessing the roof.

Concern over potential damage to the house foundation due to the proximity of the trees is not warranted. Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting force required to lift or crack concrete that forms the foundation of a house. Roots are, however, capable of growing into any available space that offers water and air. If proper drainage has not been provided, cracking 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. Where damage to a house foundation has occurred, repair can be typically undertaken without requiring tree removal.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and bylaws including the *City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Tree, 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 these 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 part of the application, the property owner has proposed to plant two (2) large growing shade trees in the backyard. However, in this instance, it would be appropriate

for the owner 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 possible healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The Colorado spruce trees at 18 Longhouse Place 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. Urban Forestry, therefore, does not support removal of these trees.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Jason Doyle  
Director of Urban Forestry  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Photograph of the spruce trees and the existing house

Attachment 2 – Photograph of the spruce trees and the existing house

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the spruce trees and the house



Attachment 2– Photograph of the spruce trees and the house

