

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 22 Fareham Crescent

Date: December 1, 2016

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 43 – Scarborough East

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove a privately-owned tree located at 22 Fareham Crescent. The application indicates the main reasons for requesting tree removal are: concerns that the roots of the tree are causing cracks in the foundation of an existing house and attached garage; that falling branches have caused damage to property; and that more dead branches could fall which pose a hazard to people and property in the backyard.

The subject tree is a Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) measuring 62 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry 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 a privately-owned tree located at 22 Fareham Crescent.

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 a privately-owned tree located in the backyard at 22 Fareham Crescent. The subject tree is a Norway maple measuring 62 cm in diameter. The request to remove the tree has been made to address concerns that the roots of the tree are causing cracks in the foundation of an existing house and attached garage. Additional concerns provided were that falling branches have caused damage to property and that more dead branches could fall which could cause additional damage to property and injury to people in the backyard.

The arborist report that accompanied the application describes the tree to be both in fair, structural condition and as a dangerous tree in very poor condition with significant decay.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that the tree is healthy and maintainable. All trees, even healthy trees will pose some risk of limb failure, especially during inclement weather events. Concerns, including falling branches, could be addressed through the performance of routine tree maintenance, including; inspection of structural integrity and pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices. Doing so will also reduce the likelihood of future limb failure.

With respect to the concern regarding trees roots damaging the foundation of an existing house and garage, tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the physical force required to crack concrete and, therefore, cannot damage a properly constructed and maintained foundation. Tree roots are, however, capable of growing into any available space that offers water, air and nutrients. 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. Damage such as 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, 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 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 part of the application, the property owner proposed 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 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 existing tree canopy to 40 percent. 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 long-horned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all possible healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The Norway maple tree located at 22 Fareham Crescent 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 of Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the crown of the Norway maple tree located at 22
Fareham Crescent

Attachment 2 - Photograph of the trunk of the Norway maple tree located at 22 Fareham
Crescent

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the crown of the Norway maple tree located at 22 Fareham Crescent



Attachment 2 - Photograph of the trunk of the Norway maple tree located at 22 Fareham Crescent

