

Application to Remove Two Ravine-Protected Private Trees - 7 Edgehill Road

Date: November 19, 2018

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 2 - Etobicoke Centre

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove two (2) ravine-protected, privately owned trees located at 7 Edgehill Road. Removal has been requested to address concerns that both trees have gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) egg masses which when hatched could cause potential infestation to mature maple and oak trees on site.

The subject trees are paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*) measuring 46 cm and 25 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support removal of these 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) ravine-protected, privately owned trees located at 7 Edgehill Road.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

There is no previous decision history regarding the subject trees.

COMMENTS

Urban Forestry received an application to remove two (2) ravine-protected, privately owned paper birch trees measuring 46 cm and 25 cm in diameter, situated in the side yard of 7 Edgehill Road. The application for tree removal has been made to address concerns that the trees have gypsy moth egg masses which could cause potential infestation to mature maple and oak trees on site.

The arborist report which accompanied the application indicates that both paper birch trees are in fair condition with some minor deadwood (10% of crown) and minor defoliation. Both trees are densely covered with an estimated 2,000 gypsy moth egg masses per tree. The report further indicates that this property has a history of gypsy moth infestation, however an aerial application of Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki*) was not received in spring of 2018. The homeowner retained a private arborist to inject the maple and oak trees as well as make several Btk applications to all other host trees on site. The owners claim the caterpillars make their backyard, pool, and tennis court unusable from initial hatch to pupation.

Urban Forestry staff conducted a site inspection and observed that both trees have full crowns with minor crown dieback. The trees are still healthy and maintainable at the time of the inspection. Insecticides such as Btk can be applied effectively in urban areas through foliar application in May/June to protect ornamental and shade trees. Egg masses can also be physically removed and destroyed without removing the tree.

Urban Forestry Forest Health Care Unit has proposed a large scale aerial spray program in the neighbourhood for 2019. The program, if adopted by City Council, would be implemented to treat gypsy moth. This entire neighbourhood is currently infested with gypsy moth. Removing these two healthy trees will not significantly impact the gypsy moth population in this neighbourhood.

Urban Forestry previously received a construction related application to injure both paper birch trees in 2017 associated with the construction of a new dwelling. This permit application was approved and the property owner agreed to protect both trees with acceptable injury. The trees were expected to survive well after the injury and be beneficial to canopy cover for years to come.

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 658-6 of *City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 658, Ravine and Natural Feature Protection*, permit approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the applicant has proposed to plant six (6) replacement trees. 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 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. 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 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 longhorned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The paper birch trees at 7 Edgehill Road 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

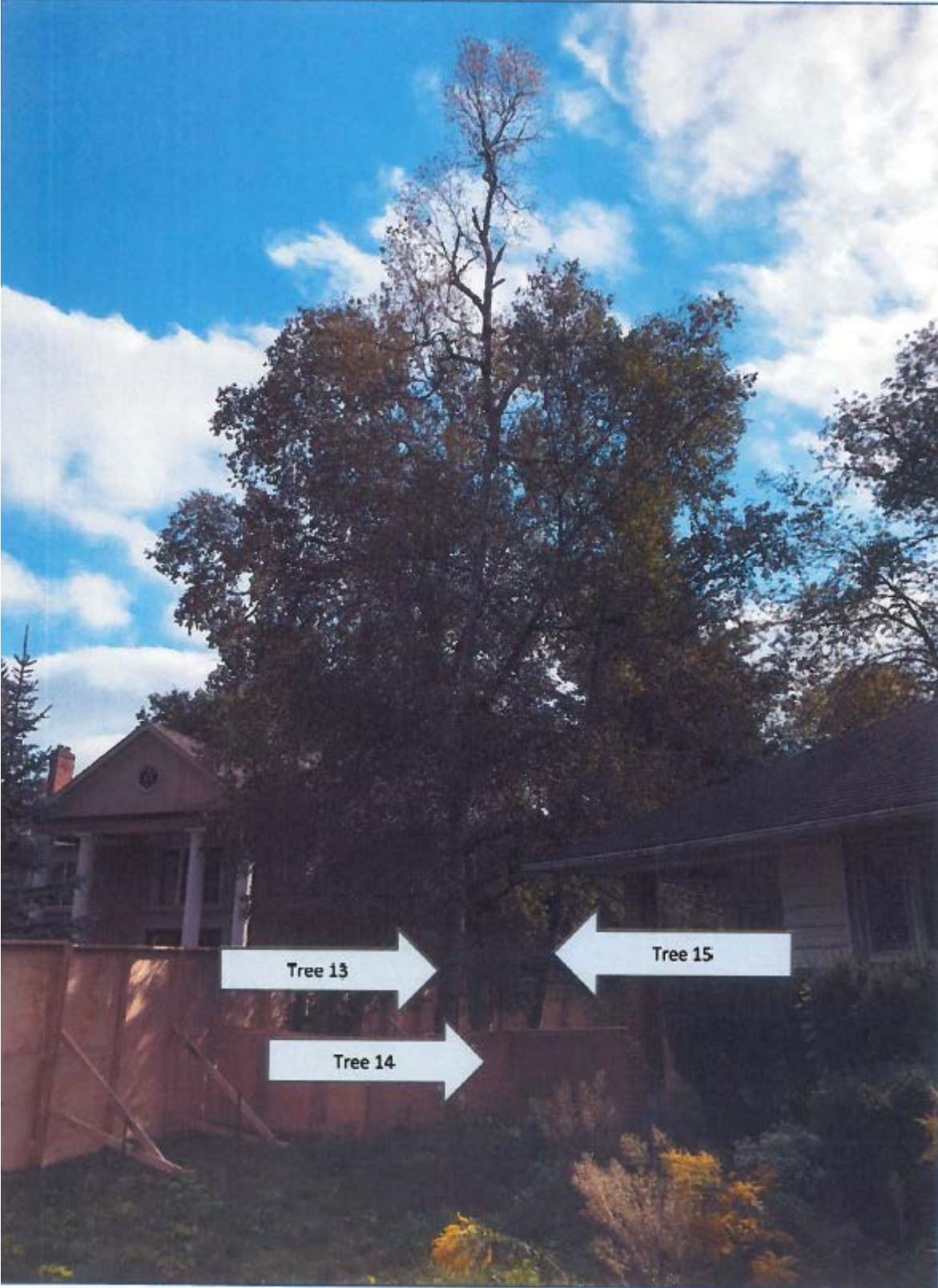
Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the subject trees (Tree #14 and #15) attached to arborist report

Attachment 2 - Photograph of gypsy moth egg masses on the trees attached to arborist report

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Attachment 2 - Photograph of gypsy moth egg masses on the trees attached to arborist report

