

Application to Remove Two Private Trees - 12 Stonedene Boulevard

Date: April 17, 2020

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: 6 - York Centre

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove two privately owned trees located at 12 Stonedene Boulevard. The application indicates two the reasons for removal; to address concerns that the roots are growing into dwelling foundations located on the above property and the adjacent property, as well as to accommodate new landscaping.

The subject trees are one Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*), measuring 43 cm in diameter and one white spruce (*Picea glauca*), measuring 54 cm in diameter. The Private Tree By-law does not support the 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 privately owned trees located at 12 Stonedene 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 two privately owned trees located in the rear yard of 12 Stonedene Boulevard. The subject trees are one Colorado blue spruce measuring 43 cm in diameter and one white spruce measuring 54 cm in diameter. The application indicated that the request to remove these trees has been made to address concerns that the roots are growing into dwelling foundations located on the above property and the adjacent property, as well as to accommodate new landscaping.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed the trees to be in poor condition.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the trees and at the time of inspection determined that both trees are healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. At the time of inspection, there were no visible indications that the trees may be causing damage to the foundations of either dwelling.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting enough force to lift or crack a properly constructed and maintained foundation. Roots cannot grow where there is no water or air. However, if proper drainage is not provided, heaving or cracking may occur as a result of water freezing and thawing, creating spaces where tree roots may grow.

Most damages to foundations can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal. Waterproofing of the foundation, if not already done, would prevent roots from growing in any existing cracks or other openings in the foundation.

The issues with understory landscaping in the backyard can be addressed by choosing species that are tolerant to shade and the acidic soil conditions common to locations beneath coniferous trees.

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 the 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 a condition of permit issuance, the applicant is proposing to plant one replacement tree for each tree removed. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide ten 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 the 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 long horned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The Colorado blue spruce and white spruce trees located at 12 Stonedene Boulevard 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. In accordance with the City Council-approved Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan and the Tree By-law, this tree should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Staff photograph of subject Colorado blue spruce tree measuring 43 cm in diameter situated in the rear yard of 12 Stonedene Boulevard

Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Staff photograph of subject white spruce tree measuring 54 cm in diameter situated in the rear yard of 12 Stonedene Boulevard

Attachment 3 - Figure 3: Staff photograph of subject trees situated in the rear yard of 12 Stonedene Boulevard. Tree 1 is the subject Colorado blue spruce tree measuring 43 cm in diameter and Tree 2 is the subject white spruce tree measuring 54 cm in diameter.

Attachment 1: Figure 1 - Staff photograph of subject Colorado blue spruce tree measuring 43 cm in diameter situated in the rear yard of 12 Stonedene Boulevard (background tree)



Attachment 2: Figure 2 - Staff photograph of subject white spruce tree measuring 54 cm in diameter situated in the rear yard of 12 Stonedene Boulevard



Attachment 3: Figure 3 - Staff photograph of subject trees situated in the rear yard of 12 Stonedene Boulevard. Tree 1 is the subject Colorado blue spruce tree measuring 43 cm in diameter and Tree 2 is the subject white spruce tree measuring 54 cm in diameter.

