

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 57 Pegasus Trail

Date: September 14, 2020

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 24 – Scarborough-Guildwood

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 57 Pegasus Trail. The application indicates the reason for removal is to address concerns over the declining health of the tree, damage to cars caused by falling debris, and damage to the driveway.

The subject tree is a white pine (*Pinus strobus*), measuring 46 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 privately owned tree located at 57 Pegasus Trail.

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 privately owned tree located at 57 Pegasus Trail. The subject tree is a white pine measuring 46 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns over the

declining health of the tree, damage to cars caused by falling debris, and damage to the driveway.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair condition. It also states that the tree is exhibiting approximately 20 per cent dieback of its canopy on the west side due to a pine borer infestation, and that the tree is starting to damage the driveway.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. The arborist report refers to a 20 per cent dieback of interior needles due to pine borer, but it is also normal for there to be some dieback of interior needles as the tree grows and they are shaded by the exterior needles. Pine trees can be attacked by a variety of insects that bore into trunks and stems. The larvae feed beneath the bark causing the main stem or branches to die off. However, no indications of pine borer infestation were observed.

The tree is located approximately 5 metres from the driveway and its branches do not overhang it. No evidence of driveway damage was visible. The south east side of the canopy has sustained some broken branches due to strong winds, but staff did not observe excessive amounts of debris falling from the tree beyond a normal amount of falling needles.

All trees drop leaves, needles, fruit or other debris. The Private Tree By-law does not support tree removal to address the perceived nuisance resulting from a tree's natural functions. Removal of debris is considered part of performing regular property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners within the City of Toronto.

Concerns expressed by the applicant regarding deadwood and falling debris can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and routine tree maintenance.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws including the *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, 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 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 is proposing to plant one replacement tree. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide five 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 healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The white pine at 57 Pegasus Trail 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 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: Staff photograph showing 46 cm white pine at 57 Pegasus Trail, March 10, 2020.

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing 46 cm white pine at 57 Pegasus Trail, March 10, 2020.

