

Application to Remove Four Private Trees – 50 St. Phillips Road

Date: May 31, 2022

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Acting Director, Urban Forestry

Wards: Ward 1 - Etobicoke North

SUMMARY

This staff report is about a matter that Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision.

This report requests that Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove four privately owned ravine-protected trees located at a golf course at 50 St. Phillips Road. The application indicates the reasons for removal are to reduce shade on the fairways and greens in order to improve the growth of grass, and to improve golf course play.

There are four subject trees regulated under the Ravine and Natural Feature Protection By-law: red oak tree (*Quercus rubra*) tree measuring 79 cm in diameter; Norway maple tree (*Acer platanoides*) tree measuring 42 cm in diameter; Norway maple tree (*Acer platanoides*) measuring 36 cm in diameter; and linden tree (*Tilia cordata*) measuring 49 cm in diameter. The Tree By-laws do not support the removal of these trees as they are healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove four privately owned ravine-protected trees located at 50 St. Phillips Road.

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 four privately owned ravine-protected trees located on a golf course at the Weston Golf and Country Club at 50 St. Phillips Road. The subject trees include one red oak tree measuring 79 cm in diameter, one Norway maple tree measuring 42 cm in diameter, one Norway maple tree measuring 36 cm in diameter, and one linden tree measuring 49 cm in diameter. The red oak tree is located at Hole 10. The Norway maple trees and linden tree are located at Hole 16. The request to remove these trees have been made to reduce shade on the fairways and greens in order to improve the growth of grass, and to improve golf course play.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the trees to be in good condition. The arborist states that the trees should be removed to allow for greater shade reduction for the growth of new turf and to enhance the playability of the fairway due to the obstruction caused by the mature trees.

Urban Forestry staff reviewed the arborist report and confirmed the trees are healthy and maintainable. The tree canopies can be pruned to reduce the encroachment into the fairways. Alternate landscaping methods can be applied to allow for new grass growth, such as choosing a turf mix that is tolerant of shade.

Through the review of the arborist report, staff have concluded that the removal of the subject tree is not permissible under the Tree By-law, City of Toronto *Municipal Code Chapter 658*. As a result of the above noted findings and in support of protecting and growing the city's urban forest, a permit to remove the tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The applicant is appealing this decision.

The red oak tree, two Norway maple trees and linden tree at 50 St. Phillip's Road are a valuable part of the urban forest that provides numerous aesthetic, social and economic benefits to the property owner and local community. Toronto's urban forest provides \$55 million in environmental benefits every year including improved air quality through pollution removal, lower storm water management costs by reducing runoff, and carbon sequestration that lessens the impacts of climate change. These trees, located within the city's ravine system, are especially valuable as ravines are some of the last refuges for native plants and wildlife that once populated the city. Their relatively natural state is what makes them so important for biodiversity and other ecosystem functions. Trees and greenspaces play an important role in mitigating impacts and risks from climate change. In Toronto, ravines are some of our largest carbon sinks and help to moderate local temperatures.

Protecting the urban forest is a key strategy for building resilience, as it continues to face increasing natural pressures such as storms and invasive pests. The 2013 ice storm resulted in the removal of over 3000 City-owned trees. The emerald ash borer beetle has killed approximately 860,000 ash trees across the city. As a result, if the City aims to reach its canopy target of 40 per cent, it is imperative that the City protect healthy trees from injury and removal whenever possible. The improved condition and

size of the urban forest will support the City of Toronto's goals to improve quality of life and well-being that enables a diverse, sustainable, innovative, growing and thriving city.

In accordance with the City Council-approved Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan, Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy, and the Ravine and Natural Feature Protection By-law, the red oak tree, two Norway maple trees, and linden tree are a valuable part of the urban forest and should not be removed.

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove four privately owned ravine-protected trees located at 50 St. Phillips Road. Should Etobicoke York Community Council grant this request for tree removal, the following recommendation may be adopted, in accordance with the City's Tree By-law permit requirements:

1) Etobicoke York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove four privately owned, ravine-protected trees located at 50 St. Phillips Road, and require the applicant to provide 20 replacement trees which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE



Kim Statham
Acting Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Arborist photograph of a red oak measuring 79 cm in diameter located at Hole #10 Weston Golf and Country Club, 50 St. Phillips Road; October 19, 2021

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Arborist photograph of a Norway maple tree measuring 42 cm in diameter located at Hole #16 Weston Golf and Country Club, 50 St. Phillips Road; October 19, 2021

Attachment 3 – Figure 3: Arborist photograph of a Norway maple tree measuring 36 cm in diameter located at Hole #16 Weston Golf and Country Club, 50 St. Phillips Road; October 19, 2021

Attachment 4 – Figure 4: Arborist photograph of a linden tree measuring 49 cm in diameter located at Hole #16 Weston Golf and Country Club, 50 St. Phillips Road; October 19, 2021

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Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Arborist photograph of a Norway maple tree measuring 42 cm in diameter located at Hole #16 Weston Golf and Country Club, 50 St. Phillips Road; October 19, 2021



Attachment 3 – Figure 3: Arborist photograph of a Norway maple tree measuring 36 cm in diameter located at Hole #16 Weston Golf and Country Club, 50 St. Phillips Road; October 19, 2021



Attachment 4 – Figure 4: Arborist photograph of a linden tree measuring 49 cm in diameter located at Hole #16 Weston Golf and Country Club, 50 St. Phillips Road; October 19, 2021

