

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 4 Hamlyn Crescent

Date: May 31, 2022

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Acting Director, Urban Forestry

Wards: Ward 2 – Etobicoke Centre

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 one privately owned tree located at 4 Hamlyn Crescent. The application indicates the reason provided for removal is due to heaving tree roots that are causing significant structural damage to the garage wall and floor, and to the driveway.

The subject tree is an American elm tree (*Ulmus americana*), measuring 63 cm in diameter. The Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is 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 one privately owned tree located at 4 Hamlyn 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 one privately owned tree located at 4 Hamlyn Crescent. The subject tree is an American elm measuring 63 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the heaving tree roots are causing significant structural damage to the garage wall and floor, and to the driveway.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting enough force to lift or crack properly constructed and maintained infrastructure such as foundation walls and driveways. However, if proper drainage is not provided, heaving or cracking may occur as a result of water freezing and thawing, creating spaces that tree roots may grow into.

The damage described here, can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal. As roots cannot grow where there is no water or air, the driveway or patio, if properly constructed and sealed, should prevent roots from growing into any existing cracks or other openings. Waterproofing of the foundation, if not already done, would prevent roots from growing in any existing cracks or other openings in the foundation.

Through this inspection and 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 813*. 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.

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 in support or objection were received in response to the application to remove the tree in question.

The American elm tree at 4 Hamlyn Crescent is 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. Through shade and transpiration, increasing urban tree cover can mitigate exposure to extreme heat events. A higher density of trees in a neighbourhood has been shown to significantly improve physical and mental health, such as reducing blood pressure and stress levels and promoting physical activity. Trees also make urban environments aesthetically more pleasing which raises property values.

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 Private Tree By-law, the American elm tree at 4 Hamlyn Crescent, as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 4 Hamlyn Crescent. 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 one privately owned tree located at 4 Hamlyn Crescent, and require the applicant to provide five 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: Staff photograph showing an American elm tree at 4 Hamlyn Crescent; December 20, 2021

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