

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 88 Toynbee Trail

Date: January 21, 2022

To: Scarborough Community Council

From: Acting 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 88 Toynbee Trail. The application indicates the reason for removal is due to safety concerns.

The subject tree is a Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), measuring 46 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. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 88 Toynbee 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 88 Toynbee Trail. The subject tree is a Norway spruce measuring 46 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address tree safety concerns.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in poor condition. The report states that the tree has more than a 35 degree lean and lost a major portion of its branches in the ice storm of 2013; the tree has been dropping buds that plug up the drain on the flat roof of the garage, causing \$2,000 in water damage; the buds that drop onto the driveway and exposed roots have created trip hazards for the owner; and the tree was planted too close to the house.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. The tree is exhibiting a slight lean, however there is no evidence of heaving or other root damage that would be indicative of potential tree failure. The tree's root system appears healthy and has grown to support the slight lean.

This tree is situated approximately 2.5 metres from the house and driveway. No evidence of the tree impacting the house and driveway was observed at the time of inspection. The tree is located such that routine maintenance of the tree, house and driveway can be performed.

The dripline of the tree does extend over the roof of the garage and increased maintenance such as sweeping or clearing debris from the roof and the eaves troughs will help eliminate water building up on the garage roof. Minor branches in the upper crown were broken in the ice storm, but this breakage does not warrant tree removal.

Many of the tree species that grow in Toronto's urban forest produce fruit that some residents consider a nuisance. Every large growing tree has some degree of maintenance associated with that can include the removal of leaves, flowers, fruit, twigs and small branches. The benefits that trees afford to a community far outweigh the maintenance inconvenience associated with falling debris.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support tree removal to address the perceived nuisance resulting from a tree's natural functions and associated concerns regarding onerous tree maintenance. 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. Two comments in support of removal were received in response to the application to remove the tree in question.

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.

The Norway spruce at 88 Toynbee Trail 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 3,000 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 Norway spruce at 88 Toynbee Trail, as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the entire profile of the Norway spruce at 88 Toynbee Trail; July, 15, 2021

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph showing the slight lean of the Norway spruce tree at 88 Toynbee Trail; July, 15, 2021

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the entire profile of the Norway spruce at 88 Toynbee Trail; July, 15, 2021



Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph showing the slight lean of the Norway spruce tree at 88 Toynbee Trail; July, 15, 2021

