

Application to Remove Three City Trees – 92 North Drive

Date: April 24, 2023

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

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

Wards: Etobicoke Centre - 2

SUMMARY

This report requests that Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove three City-owned trees located at 92 North Drive. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the trees is for a proposed driveway including a second entrance.

The two white spruce trees, *Picea glauca*, measure 31 cm and 35 cm in diameter. The Norway spruce tree, *Picea abies*, measures 46 cm in diameter. The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of these trees as they are healthy and maintainable. Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make final decisions as to whether a permit may be issued when an applicant wishes to appeal the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director of Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove three City-owned trees located at 92 North Drive.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history related to this tree removal permit application.

COMMENTS

Park, Forestry and Recreation received an application for a permit to remove three City-owned trees located on the City-owned right-of-way fronting 92 North Drive. The two white spruce trees measure 31 cm and 35 cm in diameter. The Norway spruce tree measures 46 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the trees is for a proposed driveway including a second entrance.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the white spruce tree measuring 31 cm in diameter to be in fair condition with chlorotic (yellowing) foliage and an imbalanced crown. The white spruce tree measuring 35 cm in diameter was described to be in poor condition with chlorotic foliage and the north side of the center of the crown has been cleared for overhead utility lines. The Norway spruce tree was described to be in poor condition with a bow in the main trunk and branch dieback throughout the crown.

City staff inspected the trees and at the time of inspection determined that they are healthy and maintainable. All three trees were considered by staff to have good trunk integrity with no obvious wounds or decay and good crown vigor with no major deadwood. It was noted by staff that there was a slight imbalance in all the crowns due to pruning done for the utility lines, and the lower branches have been pruned for all three trees. Overall, the trees were considered to be in fair condition.

There was some chlorosis (yellowing of leaves) in the white pines. Trees can become chlorotic when they are stressed. Mulch and adequate watering may help to reduce this condition.

The Norway spruce has a slight bow in the main trunk, where the main leader was lost, either by natural causes or due to pruning for the utility lines. This does not impact the health of the tree.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff reviewed the minor variance application submitted to the Committee of Adjustment (COA) to facilitate the construction of a new dwelling and driveway at this site and provided comments recommending denial of the variances impacting the by-law protected trees. The applicant was advised that any application to injure and/or remove a City-owned tree will be denied, regardless of COA approval. The COA approved the minor variance application on the condition that the applicant submit an application for a permit to injure or remove the City-owned trees, as per the *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees Article II Trees on City Streets*.

City staff requested that the construction plans be revised to retain the trees, but the applicant indicated that doing so was not feasible.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of these trees as they are healthy and maintainable. Through the inspection and review of the arborist report, a permit to remove the trees was denied by Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision as to whether a permit may be issued when an applicant wishes to appeal the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

Protecting the urban forest is critical in building climate resilience as urban centres continue to face increasing development, impacts due to climate change in the form of extreme weather events, and other natural threats such as invasive pests. The City has reaffirmed its canopy target of 40 per cent by 2050. One approach to support achieving this target is to protect healthy trees from injury and removal whenever possible. A sustainable and expanding urban forest also supports the City of Toronto's goals to improve quality of life and well-being of its residents.

Toronto's urban forest provides \$55 million in ecosystem services and benefits annually. Services such as air pollution removal, reduction of storm water runoff, and carbon sequestration all contribute to climate resilience. Protecting and expanding tree cover helps to mitigate exposure to extreme heat events through shade and transpiration. A higher density of trees in a neighbourhood has been shown to significantly improve physical and mental well-being by reducing blood pressure, decreasing stress levels and by promoting physical activity. Economic benefits include enhancements to property values, increased tourism and consumer spending.

In keeping with the City's Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan, Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy, and the Tree Protection By-laws, the two white spruce trees and Norway spruce tree at 92 North Drive are a valuable part of the urban forest, providing numerous aesthetic, social and economic benefits to the property owner and the local community and therefore should not be removed.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove three City-owned tree located at 92 North Drive. 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 three City-owned trees located at 92 North Drive, conditional upon the applicant:
 - providing payment of the appraised value of the tree (\$1,650.00 for the white spruce measuring 31 cm in diameter, \$2,103.00 for the white spruce measuring 35 cm in diameter, and \$3,583.00 for the Norway spruce, for a total of \$7,336.00) to be removed;
 - agreeing to have the tree removed at their expense;
 - providing five replacement trees for each tree removed, for a total of fifteen 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, and;
 - providing a tree planting security deposit to cover the cost of planting and warranty for a period of two years for all trees to be planted on City property.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the white spruce tree, measuring 31 cm in diameter, Norway spruce tree measuring 46 cm in diameter, and white spruce tree measuring 35 cm in diameter at 92 North Drive; July 23, 2021

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the white spruce tree, measuring 31 cm in diameter, Norway spruce tree measuring 46 cm in diameter, and white spruce tree measuring 35 cm in diameter at 92 North Drive; February 24, 2023

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the white spruce tree, measuring 31 cm in diameter, Norway spruce tree measuring 46 cm in diameter, and white spruce tree measuring 35 cm in diameter at 92 North Drive; July 23, 2021.



Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the white spruce tree, measuring 31 cm in diameter, Norway spruce tree measuring 46 cm in diameter, and white spruce tree measuring 35 cm in diameter at 92 North Drive; February 24, 2023.

