

## **19 Felicity Drive - Application to Remove a Private Tree**

**Date:** May 24, 2024

**To:** Scarborough Community Council

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

**Wards:** Scarborough-Guildwood - 24

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 19 Felicity Drive. The tree is protected under the Ravine and Natural Feature Protection bylaw. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the tree's lean, its proximity to the existing dwelling, and concerns regarding the potential for falling branches and tree failure.

The Austrian pine tree (*Pinus nigra*) measures 63 cm in diameter. The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. The permit was denied, and the applicant is appealing the decision. 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 denial of a permit of a tree protected under the By-laws.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned, ravine-protected tree located at 19 Felicity Drive.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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

## DECISION HISTORY

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

## COMMENTS

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Parks, Forestry and Recreation received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the front yard at 19 Felicity Drive. The Austrian pine tree (*Pinus nigra*) in question measures 63 cm in diameter. The tree is protected under the Ravine and Natural Feature Protection bylaw (ravine-protected). The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the tree's lean, its proximity to the existing dwelling, and concerns regarding the potential for falling branches and tree failure.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be viable and full of life. The report noted that limbs have fallen in the past on the garage and electrical line. The report also indicated the tree contains a noticeable and concerning lean to the tree.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff noted some non-critical deadwood in the tree and a non-critical slight lean away from the house.

Removal of deadwood can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices. Performing routine tree maintenance will prevent the accumulation of deadwood and reduce the risk of it falling.

The tree is exhibiting a slight lean due to a phototropic growth pattern. Phototropism is a natural growth pattern whereby plants grow toward available light. The lean observed is not impacting the structural integrity of the tree and is a response to light competition from the nearby house. There is no evidence of structural root plate 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.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. Through the inspection and review of the arborist report, a permit to remove the tree was denied by Parks, Forestry and Recreation. The applicant is appealing this decision. 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.

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.

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. 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 sustainable and expanding urban forest also supports the City of Toronto's goals to improve quality of life and well-being of its residents. 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 Austrian pine tree at 19 Felicity Drive is 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 Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 19 Felicity Drive. Should Scarborough 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) Scarborough Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned ravine-protected tree located at 19 Felicity Drive and require the applicant to provide six 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**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Austrian pine tree at 19 Felicity Drive;  
February 5, 2024

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