

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 65 Rowanwood Avenue

Date: October 7, 2024

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: University-Rosedale - 11

SUMMARY

This report requests that Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 65 Rowanwood Avenue and 67 Rowanwood Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns that falling branches may damage the roof; the trunk may cause damage to the property line fence; and the tree is growing in restricted soil volume which may limit the tree's growth and negatively impact its health.

The European beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica fastigiata*) measures 34 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

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

1. Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 65 Rowanwood Avenue.

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

Parks, Forestry and Recreation received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the side yard on the boundary line between the properties of 65 Rowanwood Avenue and 67 Rowanwood Avenue. The European beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica fastigiata*) in question measures 34 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns that falling branches may damage the roof; the trunk may cause damage to the property line fence; and the tree is growing in restricted soil volume which may limit the tree's growth and negatively impact its health.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good health and fair condition.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff observed healthy botanical growth, with good colouration, size, and density of foliage. While the form of the tree was not ideal, it was considered to be fair. The root zone of the tree is restricted as result of its location but does not seem to be impacting the health or growth of the tree. No significant signs of decline or defects were noted.

This tree is situated approximately 1.1 metres from the house. No evidence of the tree impacting the roof, upper deck or driveway of the house was observed at the time of inspection. The tree is located such that routine maintenance of the tree and house can be performed. Concerns expressed by the applicant regarding overhanging or falling branches may be addressed through pruning according to good arboricultural practices and routine tree maintenance.

The tree is in contact with the fence, however the potential damage to the fence described here, can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal. If an injury to the tree is required in order to complete any future the repairs, the applicant may apply for a construction permit and submit the relevant construction plans and arborist report showing how the tree will be impacted and protected during construction.

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.

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 to provide an opportunity for comment by the community. No comments were received in support nor in opposition to the application to remove the tree in question.

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 European beech tree at 65 Rowanwood Avenue 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 Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 65 Rowanwood Avenue. Should Toronto and East 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) Toronto and East York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 65 Rowanwood Avenue 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

Raymond Vendrig
Acting Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the crown of the European beech tree at 65 Rowanwood Avenue; July 3, 2024

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph showing the proximity of the European beech tree to the property line fence at 65 Rowanwood Avenue; July 3, 2024

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the crown of the European beech tree at 65 Rowanwood Avenue; July 3, 2024



Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph showing the proximity of the European beech tree to the property line fence at 65 Rowanwood Avenue; July 3, 2024

