



Gordon Woods Homeowners' Association

MISSISSAUGA ONTARIO

November 18th, 2012

To: Members of Council:
Mayor Hazel McCallion
Jim Tovey (Ward 1)
Pat Mullin (Ward 2)
Chris Fonseca (Ward 3)
Frank Dale (Ward 4)
Bonnie Crombie (Ward 5)
Ron Starr (Ward 6)
Nando Iannicca (Ward 7)
Katie Mahoney (Ward 8)
Pat Saito (Ward 9)
Sue McFadden (Ward 10)
George Carlson (Ward 11)
cc: Crystal Greer (City Clerk)

Re: Tree by-law Amendment

After careful review of the proposed Amendments to the current Tree Permit Bylaw 475-05, the Directors of the Gordon Woods Homeowners Association support the changes recommended by Forestry staff along with the following comments and recommendations.

Since the Tree Permit By-law was last amended in 2005, various initiatives including the Living Green Master Plan (2011) have highlighted the need to protect the city's natural environment. Everyone is in agreement with the fact that trees are an important part of our community, enhance the economic value of our homes and properties and contribute to our quality of life.

The intent of making changes to the bylaw is to have better control of tree cutting and replanting in our neighborhoods where infill development is on the increase. Additionally, the Private Tree by-law provides a 'standardized and equitable approach to protecting the City's urban forest.' The current bylaw is outdated in that it centers more on tree cutting procedures than on forestry management and tree preservation.

We support the following amendments to the Tree Permit By-law 475-05 and include suggestions for modifications as outlined below:



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MISSISSAUGA ONTARIO

1. Name change from 'Tree Permit By-law' to 'Private Tree Protection By-law'.

We support the name change as it focuses the intent towards protecting trees rather than on managing the tree cutting process.

2. A permit is required to remove 3 or more trees with a diameter of 15 cm or greater in a calendar year.

We support this change to the bylaw as it allows for better management of the medium size trees as they mature.

While we support this change, there is an agreement from our residents to include additional protection for the larger trees and we propose to include a provision whereby a single tree permit is required for 'distinctive' trees. These are cultural landmarks defined as any tree with a diameter of 50cm (20 inches) or greater as measured at 1.4 meters above ground level. Their value to the community includes significant economic, aesthetic and environmental benefits. Their loss negatively impacts the character of our neighborhoods.

We estimate this provision would apply to less than 3 percent of all the trees on private property in the City of Mississauga, many of which are located in Gordon Woods, a unique urban forest in Ward 7.

This provision would align our bylaw with other large municipalities across Canada. The City of Ottawa includes a 'distinctive' tree provision at 50 cm and Toronto has established 30cm as their guideline for a single tree permit.

3. Replacement tree proposal

There has been much discussion regarding replanting guidelines and we agree with the Forestry department that the original proposed changes were too strict and costly for individual property owners.

We are in agreement with maintaining the 1:1 replacement ratio and recommend the 1:2 replacement ratio for the trees 50cm in diameter or greater. The size and species criteria should be left up to forestry staff to decide.

4. Fines and Permit fees

We agree with the increase in fines and the proposed changes to the permit fees. At the same time we also agree the changes will not stop builders or corporations from removing trees without a permit if they choose to do so. Adding a 'stop work order' or building permit restrictions to those who choose to break the rules is another way to ensure the guidelines are followed.



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MISSISSAUGA ONTARIO

According to the Corporate Report dated February 8th, 2012, the additional revenue the increased number of applications would generate will cover the cost to administer and enforce the above changes including additional staffing and the promotion of increased awareness.

The Corporate Report also recognizes several new policy initiatives over the past seven years that reflect the need for changes to the current by-law:

- Action 46 of the Living Green Master Plan - directs an amendment to the existing bylaw to include single trees and further measures to restrict tree removals and ensure consistency with the Official Plan.
- The Official Plan further recognizes that in order to achieve a sustainable urban tree canopy, it must be protected, maintained and enhanced. A tree protection program should encourage small trees to mature as well as protect large, healthy trees that add much value to the community.

The updated tree bylaw will provide us with a modern framework in which to manage our urban forest and ensure good stewardship of our trees for future generations.

The comments above have been reviewed by all Directors of the Gordon Woods Homeowners Association. We propose the timing is appropriate for the above amendments to the existing Tree Permit By-law effective March 1, 2013 and endorse their approval.

Respectfully,

The Executive of the Gordon Woods Homeowners Association

Sharon Giraud, President
Don Stewart, VP
Andy Tafler, VP
Shelly Byman, Membership
Richard Dundas, Secretary