



February 20, 2006

Chairman Savoline and all members of Halton Regional Council
Regional Municipality of Halton
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, Ontario
L6M 3L1

Dear Sirs and Mesdames,

I am writing you with regards to the issues of preserving the large White Oak on Bronte Road in front of Halton Regional Office. First of all we would like to tell you who we are.

The Ontario Urban Forest Council is working in partnership with several other groups and individuals across the province to provide practical tools and support for communities that want to identify and protect heritage trees. In 2004 with support from Community Heritage Ontario, OUF C spawned a new group of individuals interested in documenting Heritage Trees with a focus of identifying and protecting not only single specimen trees but arboreal remnants of our past.

The Ontario Heritage Tree Alliance (OHTA) is working to ensure that our urban forests are protected now so that future generations can enjoy what will become their heritage trees. The OHTA is developing a toolkit for use by local communities to identify trees they deem to be worthy of heritage designation. Among the items that will be in the toolkit are nomination and evaluation forms; model tree protection bylaw templates; examples of tree hunts; examples of heritage trees that have been designated and the means of doing so without official protection; resource materials and personnel; tree profiles and even budget guidelines. This toolkit will be ready in February 2006 for Community Use.

To date we have received numerous calls and have followed up on Heritage Tree activities in the GTA, Barrie and Simcoe County, Elora, Belleville, and even as far as Thunder Bay . Some individuals have made requests to have trees nominated and evaluated so that they can be entered into the OHTA database. It is our hope that many of these trees will receive provincial status from the Ministry of Culture but now our focus is on municipal heritage committees and local and regional councils.

Earlier this month, I was contacted by Ward 4 Councillors Renee Sandelowsky and Allan Elgar to bring attention to a large, old White Oak located on Bronte Road in front of the Halton Regional Office. I have read the support letter from the Shade Tree Research Laboratory (U of T) prepared by Dr. Jorgensen in 1971 who in fact helped found our predecessor, the Ontario Shade Tree Council back in 1964.

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More importantly, I have also read the letter of agreement to the previous property owner, Mr. George Atkins from the Department of Transport indicating that every precaution will be taken to guard the safety of this tree.

An Environmental Assessment has been completed in September 2002 with regards to the proposed road widening of Bronte Road at the Regional Center. As a Registered Consulting Arborist, I personally would like to ask how the age of this tree and the general lifespan of White Oaks were determined and reported to the EA. Even though this tree may be 240 years old, it is not at the limit of its lifespan, in my opinion. I agree that the health of the tree is moderate to high with minor crown dieback. Furthermore, the option to "widen around the Oak Tree" seems the most reasonable and comparative in costs with the other 3 options. I disagree that this option would have a significant impact to the tree for the following reasons. The paving on the east side of the tree must be limited to the west curb of the existing parking lot or 1 ½ times the drip-line of the tree. This will preserve the soil volume area for the tree in its present state. This tree is already impacted by environmental and man made stresses such as "Salt Spray" and has survived heroically. As the drip-line of the tree will not encroach over the proposed road space on the east side, then I cannot see any safety hazard in terms of sightline issues. Signage always has been used to prevent wrong way travel.

Peter Dmytrasz (OUFC/OHTA Director) and I met with Renee Sandelowsky and Allan Elgar on January 25th to complete the OHTA Evaluation Form. At this time, we confirmed as professionals that the viability of this tree would be in the top category of 30 years plus.

We also agreed that the tree has qualified as a Heritage Tree and will be entered into our database.

It is our hope that you will stand together behind the completed Heritage Tree Nomination Form as submitted by Renee and Allan and will take action to ensure its continued viability and legacy. We also hope that you will discuss at your next meeting the completed OHTA evaluation form along with all the concerns, letters from others and what you expect to do in terms of supporting our evaluation and recommendation.

Certainly the recognition can be in the form of a dedicated plaque but more importantly documentation in your local or regional Heritage Registries leading to provincial status.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to meet to discuss the preservation of this tree further.

Yours truly,



Jack Radecki
Executive Director
Ontario Urban Forest Council

cc. Mayor Ann Mulvale and all members of Oakville Council

"Heritage tree: a noble specimen because of its size, form, shape, beauty, age, colour, variety, genetic constitution or other distinctive features; a living relic that displays evidence of cultural modification by Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people including strips of bark or knot-free wood removed, test hole cut to determine soundness, furrows cut to collect pitch or sap or blazes to mark a trail; a prominent community landmark; a specimen associated with a historic person, place or event or period; a representative of a crop grown by ancestors and their successors that is at risk of disappearing from cultivation; a tree associated with local folklore, myths, legends or traditions; a specimen identified by members of a community as deserving heritage recognition."

As defined by Dr. Paul Aird, Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto

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