



To: Committee of Adjustment

From: Guelph Urban Forest Friends (GUFF)

Re: File B/8-23, 51 Hazelwood Dr.

Date: June 1, 2023

Guelph Urban Forest Friends is a group of citizens who advocate for our Urban Forest canopy and educate citizens about the importance of this canopy. Guelph has a current tree canopy of approximately 23% with a goal of reaching 40% by 2070- almost double what we have now. The City and many NGO groups are focussed on planting as many new trees as possible, but it is critical that we retain our mature trees that anchor much of this canopy if we are to reach that goal. These elder trees provide many eco-services that are essential as we face climate change- habitat, cooling, biodiversity, water management, carbon sequestration. Even mental health is improved by trees! Our newly planted and younger trees will take years to provide these services in a significant way.

The trees on the property at 51 Hazelwood have been working for us all providing environmental services in silence for many years now. The current lot size is within the requirements of our Private Tree Bylaw that offers protection to these trees. To drop this protection when lot size is reduced through severance, does not make sense, and runs counter to community values. These trees are also the last historical reminders of the agricultural industry that existed before the subdivision surrounded this remaining artifact of the original farmland. They are survivors and with care can continue for many more years.

We ask that there be a tree inventory done on this property before severance and that as many trees as possible be required to be retained and protected during the proposed building of any new homes on any pieces of this property. This would require that the design of the homes on any of the resulting lots consider the roots and water needs of the retained trees.

The Tree Protection Bylaw is under review and an updated Bylaw will come in force in 2024. It is anticipated that to achieve our stated canopy goal of 40%, the lot size limitation for tree protection will not exist in the new Bylaw. Protection of these trees would reflect the changing understanding of the importance of trees in mitigating climate change. Guelph citizens are speaking up for trees as shown by their support of planting and tree initiatives. We ask that COA do whatever is possible to reflect this cultural value in its decision.

Susan Rietschin
Guelph Urban Forest Friends Steering Committee
■ Bellevue St Guelph ON ■■■■■■

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is NOW.

Let’s make sure we protect the ones we have.”

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