

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	June 10, 2021
Subject / Report No:	PDR-CW-15-21
Title:	Bothwell Creek Holdings Minor Exemption Application
Prepared by:	Sarah Johnson
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	City of Owen Sound
Status:	Adopted as presented by Committee of the Whole through Resolution CW93-21; Endorsed by County Council CC51-21

Recommendation

1. **That Report PDR-CW-15-21 be received; and**
2. **That the application for a Minor Exemption under the County's Forest Management By-law for Lot 10, Range 7 EGR, in the Geographic Township of Sydenham, City of Owen Sound be approved.**

Executive Summary

The County has received a minor exemption application to the Forest Management By-law to clear land to remove a small stand of trees. The small stand trees consist mainly of Ash trees the majority of which are affected by an invasive species (Emerald Ash Borer). Other trees include old fruit trees. The purpose of the application is to clear the lands for farming purposes.

County staff are recommending approval of the minor exemption application.

Background and Discussion

An application for a minor exemption was received for clear cutting under the County's Forest Management By-law.

The subject lands are located at Lot 10, Range 7 EGR, in the Geographic Township of Sydenham, City of Owen Sound. The lands have frontage on 20th Street East and are approximately 43 acres (17.5 hectares) in size.

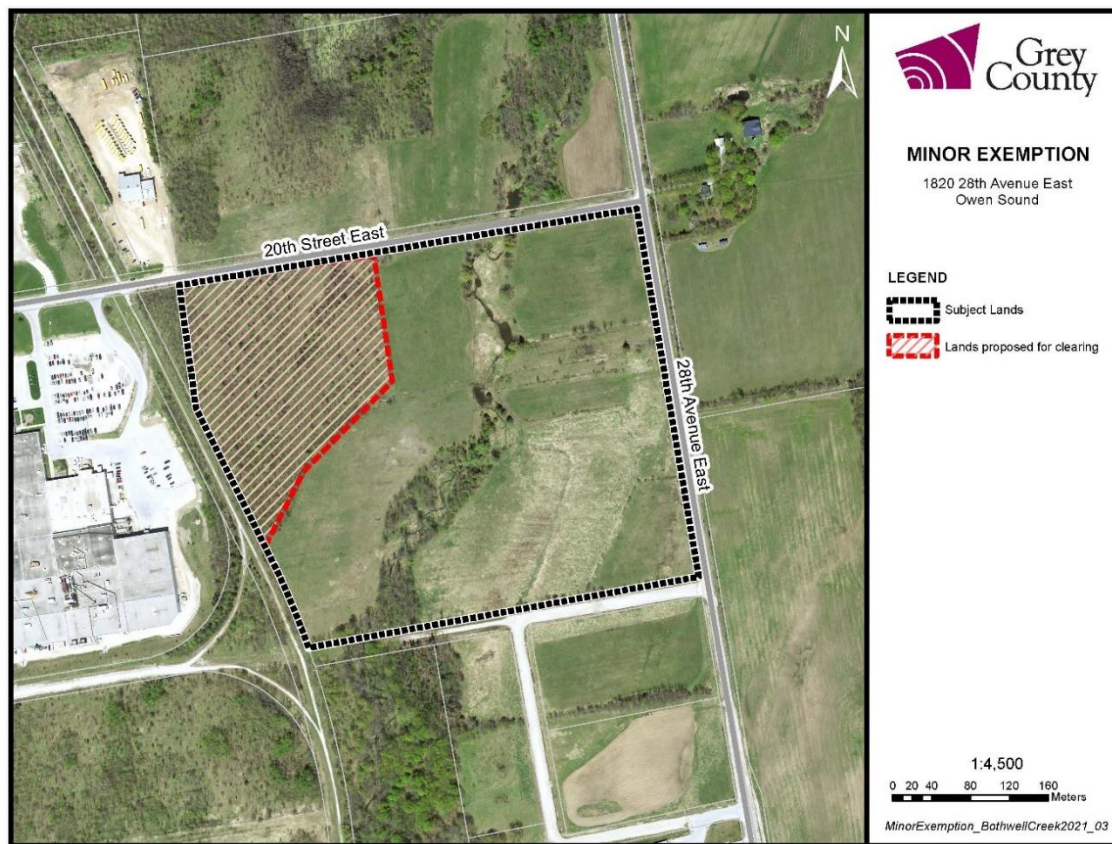
The intent of the application is to clear/remove the ash trees that are infected by the Emerald Ash Borer to create productive farmable crop lands.

The applicant provided a recommendation from a forester, Patrick Godin, which confirmed the presence of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the majority of the young ash present on site. No species at risk were noted, and no stick nests were observed.

The County Official Plan designates the property as Primary Settlement Area, with a small portion in hazard lands that correspond with the stream that runs through the property. None of the tree clearing is proposed in the Hazard Lands. There are a small portion of significant woodlands identified on this property in proximity to the stream, none of which are subject to this application.

Surrounding the subject lands are predominantly farmlands with the County's Rail Trail abutting the west of the parcel and some industrial/commercial uses further to the west.

The application was circulated to the City of Owen Sound, the Municipality of Meaford, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority staff, the County's By-law Enforcement Officer and neighbouring landowners.



Map 1 - Forest Clearing Request

Agency and Public Comments Received

Under the Forest Management By-law, adjacent landowners, conservation authorities, Municipal and County staff are to be notified and/or consulted when an application is received.

Public Comments

No public comments were received during the processing of this application.

Agency Comments

The Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA), The City of Owen Sound, and the County's Forest By-law Enforcement Officer provided comments on this application.

The property is on the boundary of the City of Owen Sound and the Municipality of Meaford. The Municipality of Meaford had no concerns with the proposal.

GSCA Staff provided comments on April 26, 2021 and May 18, 2021. Staff noted in the comments that based on the fact that the tree removal is proposed outside of the hazard lands and their regulated area, as well as the fact that the majority of trees proposed for removal were infected young ash, they do not have any opposition with the proposal moving forward without further study.

The City of Owen Sound had no objections to the minor exemption application.

Grey County's Forest By-law Enforcement Officer noted that he had no issues with the application as the trees involved were old apple and young ash.

County Staff are recommending approval of the minor exemption application. Staff also require that the ash trees be disposed of using best forestry management practices to limit the further spread of the invasive species.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The application will be processed in accordance with the County's Forest Management By-law.

Financial and Resource Implications

At this time there are no expected financial or resource considerations beyond those normally encountered in processing a Minor Exemption application. The County has received an application fee with the file.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Planning and Grey County By-law Enforcement Officer
- External: City of Owen Sound, Municipality of Meaford, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and the public

Appendices and Attachments

None