



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1688, **Version:** 2

Resolution to Direct the City Administrator to Evaluate Preservation of the Chimney Swift Roost at 415 West Washington Street

The City is considering the redevelopment of the property at 415 West Washington Street. As part of the site's preparation, the City has received Historic District Commission approval of a notice to proceed to demolish the existing structures at the Commission's September 20, 2018 meeting, although at this time no demolition activities have been scheduled. While renovation of the other buildings has been evaluated and is not considered to be cost-effective, separate preservation of the chimney that is located on the site nearest to West Washington Street has not been evaluated. Staff has been advised that this chimney is used as a roosting site for thousands of migrating chimney swifts each year. Some members of the community, including the Washtenaw Audubon Society, have expressed interest in preserving this chimney as habitat.

Staff has been further advised that chimney swifts are a migratory bird that is a breeding visitor to the Ann Arbor community and they have a beneficial impact on the local environment in that they feed on flying insects and other pests, eating up to 1/3 of their body weight per day and that chimney swifts are free of transmissible diseases. Chimney swifts have been designated as a near-threatened species by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and staff has been told that the chimney hosts the largest population in the community.

The purpose of this resolution is to ensure that the preservation and ongoing protection of the chimney described here as the roosting site for the chimney swifts is evaluated for feasibility and cost as part of any City redevelopment plans for the property at 415 West Washington Street.

Budget and Fiscal Impact: This resolution has no immediate fiscal impact.

Prepared by: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

Approved by: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor has received Historic District Commission approval of a notice to proceed to demolish the existing structures on the property at 415 West Washington Street for purposes of future redevelopment of the property;

Whereas, The chimney nearest to West Washington Street on the property is used as a roost by chimney swifts, which have a beneficial impact on the local environment and are listed as near-threatened by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature;

Whereas, As the science and understanding of chimney swift biology is always changing, and the City has no immediate plans for demolition, it is important the City review the current best practices for chimney swift survivability at the time of development or demolition of associated structures; and

Whereas, With its location on the route of the proposed Treeline Trail, the chimney swift activity at the site could add an educational and viewing amenity for users of the trail;

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator shall include evaluation of the structural integrity of the chimney as part of any City redevelopment plans for the property at 415 West Washington Street;

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator shall include an evaluation of the feasibility and cost of preserving the chimney for chimney swifts as part of any City redevelopment plans for the property at 415 West Washington Street;

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator shall provide the results of the structural evaluation and feasibility and cost evaluation to City Council as part of any City redevelopment plans submitted to City Council for the property at 415 West Washington Street and prior to demolition of the chimney;

RESOLVED, That if, prior to submission of the evaluations to City Council, the City undertakes demolition or construction of structures on the property at 415 West Washington other than the chimney, those activities will be planned to protect the integrity of the chimney and timed to avoid conflict with the migration activities of the chimney swifts; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator shall consult with appropriate ornithology sources regarding the chimney swifts before determining whether and how to undertake demolition or development of structures on the property at 415 West Washington.

Sponsored by: Mayor Taylor and Councilmember Bannister