

Saving the swifts: “The miracle on Wyandotte Street”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Environment, Swifts January 6, 2021

🌿 *Latest in a series of posts on the Swifts* 🌿



The initial campaign surge has slowed!

Won't you join with us and contribute?

Click [here](#) for the GoFundMe page.

Jennie Gilrain, who spearheads the Save Our Swifts campaign, made this impressive presentation to City Council last night (4 mins.):

First:

I want to share an uplifting story in the midst of difficult times! A group of citizens from all walks of life is joining forces to save tens of thousands of Chimney Swifts, a bird in sharp decline, by saving their Urban Habitat, the Masonic Temple chimney at 202 Wyandotte Street in South Bethlehem. Developer and property owner, John Noble, has agreed to save the chimney, while demolishing the building around it, in order to save the birds. I visited the demolition site this afternoon to see the chimney still standing. The Western wall has been ripped away and the

steel beams have been cut flush to the chimney's edge. So far, so good. However, in the end, if the existing chimney cannot be saved, Noble has agreed to build a duplicate roosting tower on the property, 60 feet to the North of the original.

The Lehigh Valley Audubon Society is raising money to support this effort through a Save Our Swifts GoFundMe Charity. According to Peter Saenger, local Audubon President, this level of cooperation between developers and conservationists is extremely unusual and highly commendable. I call it, "Miracle on Wyandotte Street."

Second:

The Lehigh Valley Audubon Society and Bethlehem Area Public Library have applied for a Lehigh Valley Engaged Humanities Consortium grant to support a series of Public Forums to facilitate discussion about the relationship between development and conservation. I invite members of Bethlehem City Government—the Department of Community and Economic Development and the Environmental Action Committee to join the panels, and I invite the public to participate in the forums. More on this when we find out if we got the grant.

Finally:

In light of the tremendous community effort to Save Our Swifts, I would like to make a formal request to you, the Members of Council and to you, Mayor Donchez:

Just as many cities around the world and throughout the United States have named particular bird species as their own; and just as so many years ago the State of Pennsylvania named the Ruffed Grouse the Bird of Pennsylvania, I propose we name the Chimney Swift, "the Bird of Bethlehem."

The chimney swift is not only a beautiful aerial acrobat, but a welcome insectivore, consuming twice its body weight in bugs each day.

Thank you for hearing me and for considering embracing this bird as Bethlehem's own.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Jennie Gilrain

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