

Developer John Noble on saving the chimney to save the Swifts: “It’s going to be pretty cool”

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Environment](#), [Swifts](#) April 25, 2021

🦉 Latest in a series of posts on the Swifts 🦉

The Swifts are the official City Bird of Bethlehem
They need your help



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On April 21 Masonic Temple developer John Noble kicked off the last forum in the *S.O.S. Save Our Swifts by Saving their Urban Habitat: Telling the Story of the Chimney Swifts and their Connection to Our City* series hosted by the Bethlehem Area Public Library and the Audubon Society.

Noble’s immediate commitment to this project suggested to him by Jennie Gilrain is absolutely remarkable.

Listen to his philosophy of developing in general and his passion for this project of saving the Masonic Temple chimney for our Swifts.

Audio Player not available in this archive

I personally have always felt that conservation and basically nature was part of any element you do in life, so anything I’ve tried to do I’ve actually tried to create balances so it didn’t impact surrounding neighbors, nature, and everything else.

One of the thing I’ve always strived to do . . . No matter what I did, you ultimately had to improve how it impacted the community, the neighbors, and nature.

When I brought the property, there was a minimum amount of trees. When we get done with this project, it's actually going to be a lot more harmonious with how nature, birds, and wild life, and people can live in that area.

As a developer, it's always important not only to create different structures and uses but also create a better environment for the neighbors and nature. It's a big balance and you have to do it.

We're going to make the environment a lot more natural [doubling the number of trees].

I already had a vision for the property and how to make it better. . . With the phone call I got from Jennie [Gilrain], it was pure enlightenment. . . . It was kind of a fun phone call. . . . She sent over the video. . . . And all of a sudden the project became something that was not only going to benefit the community and be fun to do, it also became a passion — how do we do something that most people wouldn't think to do, which is to save these birds. . . . It became that much more fun.

For probably two weeks after that phone call, I learned more about Swifts, birds, and chimneys than I could ever have imagined in my lifetime.

The ultimate outcome of this thing was we kind of created awareness in the entire town, in the community, my own personal awareness, and it became a real challenge, how do we save this chimney, and save this habitat so that these birds have a good probability of using it.

When we get done, right now we've actually saved the structure, but we've also totally redesigned the building to accept the load of this chimney, so when we're done . . . we're going to have that chimney as literally a focal point

It's one of those big time bonuses that everything fit together.

When you come in, when you drive on our site, probably the first thing you are going to see is a big chimney. It's going to be pretty cool.