

Wilmington, Delaware
January 8, 2026

#0157

Sponsor:

**Council
Member
Darby**

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington acquired the Gibraltar estate in December 2023 for \$900,000 in taxpayer funds, and has since invested over \$2.3 million in local and state funding into its stabilization and restoration; and

WHEREAS, the property was later transferred to the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank (WNCLB), an entity created by City Council for the purpose of serving the public interest through land disposition and redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the current proposal under consideration would transfer this publicly funded asset to a newly formed private nonprofit, without a public RFP (request for proposals), transparent governance, or formal feasibility assessment, raising serious concerns about fairness, oversight, and long-term community benefit; and

WHEREAS, Council members, community residents, and observers have noted that the nonprofit seeking ownership does not have publicly available information regarding its board or financials, and public meeting attendees have reported that they were advised that the organization is a private nonprofit and not subject to public transparency obligations; and

WHEREAS, the Land Bank must act with the utmost integrity and transparency when managing significant public assets, particularly those restored with taxpayer dollars.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank (WNCLB) is strongly urged to pause any transfer of the Gibraltar estate to private ownership until a public, transparent, and expert-informed process can be developed and completed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council encourages WNCLB to conduct a full feasibility assessment of the Gibraltar estate, including use, ownership structure, financing options, and community access. The Urban Land Institute’s Technical Assistance Panel (TAP), which uses cross-sector experts including developers, architects, and lenders, is recommended for this purpose; explore financing options that preserve public access and ownership, including public-private partnerships, federal historic preservation grants, and other innovative development tools; include covenants in any future property transfer that prohibit personal financial benefit for board members and require a competitive public bidding process for all contractors, consultants, and developers; and establish a Community & Technical Advisory Board made up of residents, historic preservationists, architects, developers, and City Council representatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Community & Technical Advisory Board should help oversee the transfer process and any long-term redevelopment plans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council supports efforts to restore and revitalize Gibraltar in a manner that protects the public’s investment, promotes community benefit, and ensures public access—not private enrichment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council affirms that all future actions related to Gibraltar must reflect the values of transparency, accountability, and equitable redevelopment.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution urges the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank to pause the transfer of the Gibraltar estate and engage in a transparent, equitable, and expert-guided redevelopment process.