Wilmington, Delaware
December 3, 2026

#xxxx

Sponsor:

Council Member Darby

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington recognizes the importance of preserving properties that contribute to the historical, architectural, and cultural character of its neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the property located at 528 N. Taylor Street, Wilmington, Delaware, has been identified by community stakeholders as a property worthy of preservation and potential rehabilitation for community use; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank ("Land Bank") plays an important role in addressing vacant, abandoned, and deteriorating properties throughout the City of Wilmington and facilitating their productive reuse. On June 18, 2025, the Land Bank's request for a permit to demolish this site was approved by the Wilmington Design Review and Preservation Commission; and

WHEREAS, an October 13, 2025, building condition assessment prepared by Desmond A. Baker & Associates, LLC, determined that the building was generally in good structural condition, with the exception of certain areas requiring restoration, including the second-floor balcony; and

WHEREAS, the assessment further identified no widespread structural failure, no apparent extensive interior wall failures, and no significant evidence of water infiltration, suggesting that rehabilitation alternatives warrant further consideration; and

WHEREAS, community representatives, including Mr. Harmon R. Carey, have expressed concerns regarding the potential demolition of the property and have advocated for its preservation and transfer to the Afro-American Historical Society; and

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WHEREAS, the potential transfer of the property to the Afro-American Historical Society could provide an opportunity to rehabilitate the building and establish a space dedicated to African American history, cultural preservation, education, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, demolition is an irreversible action that should be considered only after reasonable opportunities for rehabilitation, preservation, and community redevelopment have been thoroughly evaluated; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington City Council believes that decisions involving properties with potential historical and community significance should include meaningful engagement with residents, preservation advocates, and community organizations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that this Council urges the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank ("Land Bank") and any other responsible parties to immediately suspend any planned demolition activities involving 528 N. Taylor Street until a comprehensive review of preservation and rehabilitation alternatives has been completed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council respectfully requests that Mayor John Carney and his Administration communicate directly with the leadership of the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank to advocate for the preservation of the property and facilitate discussions regarding alternatives to demolition.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council encourages the Land Bank to review the October 13, 2025, assessment prepared by Desmond A. Baker & Associates, LLC, and, if necessary, obtain an updated independent structural assessment to determine the feasibility and estimated costs of rehabilitation.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council urges the Land Bank to engage the Afro-American Historical Society in discussions regarding the potential conveyance, sale, or transfer of the property, subject to applicable laws, organizational requirements, and a feasible rehabilitation plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council encourages the Land Bank and the Mayor's Office to convene a meeting with interested community stakeholders, preservation advocates, and representatives of the Afro-American Historical Society to discuss the property's future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council requests that the Land Bank provide a written response within thirty (30) days of adoption of this Resolution addressing: 1. The property's current ownership and legal status; 2. Whether demolition has been approved, scheduled, contracted, or funded; 3. Any outstanding code violations or documented public safety concerns; 4. The feasibility of rehabilitation and preservation; 5. The process and requirements for transferring the property to a community-based nonprofit organization; and 6. Any immediate actions necessary to prevent demolition while preservation alternatives are evaluated.

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Passed by City Council,

ATTEST:_____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution formally urges the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank to immediately halt and suspend any planned demolition of the historic property located at 528 N. Taylor Street, Wilmington, Delaware. Citing the October 13, 2025, structural engineering assessment prepared by Desmond A. Baker & Associates, LLC, which found the property structurally sound with no widespread structural failure, this Resolution encourages the Land Bank and Mayor John Carney to explore preservation, rehabilitation, and community conveyance opportunities with the Afro-American Historical Society. Additionally, it requests a written status report from the Land Bank within thirty (30) days regarding property status, safety, feasibility, and non-profit transfer procedures.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT (Pursuant to Wilmington City Code § 2-36 / Ord. 25-069) Direct Fiscal Impact of this Action: This Resolution is an advisory policy recommendation and request for administrative action directed to the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank and the Executive Administration. It does not authorize an appropriation, incur municipal debt, alter tax rates, or result in direct operating or capital expenditures for the City of Wilmington General Fund upon adoption.

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