



SEARCH HOME TOWN LIFE

Local News Classifieds Jobs More »

SPONSORED BY:



POWERED BY YOU AND THE **Observer & Eccentric mirror** Hometown

City calls for repairs at landmark site

BY ANNETTE KINGSBURY • ECCENTRIC STAFF WRITER • OCTOBER 2, 2008

[Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#)

Love it or hate it, the Rochester Elevator is showing signs of age.

Back in June, owner Lawrence Smith was given 30 days to make cosmetic repairs to the main elevator building at East University and Water Street, adjacent structures and a house he owns across the street at 428 East St. Among the city's complaints were holes in a roof, missing paint, broken windows, piles of debris and multiple parked vehicles.

Since then, the East Street house has been repaired, both sides agree. But the commercial buildings have not. Smith has now requested a hearing on the matter, which is scheduled for the City Council's Oct. 13 meeting.

Smith would prefer to sell the property and has been trying to for years. A deal seemed close in 2005, when senior-citizen condominiums were proposed. The Rochester-Avon Historical Society then formulated a plan to move the original 1880 portion of the elevator to city-owned land a short distance to the south, next to the Clinton River Trail and the south Main Street bridge.

But the developers backed out and all the plans were put on hold. The elevator's current site has since been proposed for a city park known as Elevator Square.

When the sale fell through, Smith canceled plans to move his business to a building on Tienken. For now, he's not planning to go anywhere.

"If we sell, we'd have different plans," he said. "I have an obligation here and I can't just walk off."

Smith said last week he had no idea how much the requested repairs would cost. He'd still like to sell the property, which has been declared a brownfield, or contaminated site, and is therefore eligible for tax-funded cleanup assistance.

The Historical Society considers the original portion of the grain elevator an icon of early Rochester. A 2005 report from a barn expert commissioned by the Society found that the building could withstand the move, which was estimated to cost \$100,000. Rehabilitation for eventual new uses was expected to cost up to \$500,000.

"If the land is sold, the buyer or I would cooperate with the Historical Society," Smith said.

In Your Voice

[READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY](#)

characters left



Rochester Elevator owner Lawrence Smith is being pressed to improve the appearance of his business, which he has owned since 1956. (John Stormzand | Staff Photographer)



The Rochester Elevator, one of the city's landmark buildings, is located at the corner of Water and University. (John Stormzand | Staff Photographer)

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

ADS BY PULSE 360

[Get Listed Here](#)

AARP & The Hartford Auto Insurance

Save \$363 On AARP Auto Insurance If You're Over 49. Free Quotes Now!

AARP.TheHartford.com

A good Credit Score =700 or Above

Do You Know Yours? Get it for \$0!

www.FreeCreditReport.com

Obama Voter Registration

If You're Not Registered, You Cant Vote. Register to Vote Today!

Michigan.VoteForChange.com



Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Weather](#) | [Voices & Views](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Community Life](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright ©2008 the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Mirror Newspapers and Hometown Weeklies
Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#), updated March 2007.