

## 2011-J3090

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 130th Anniversary of Ozone Park, Queens, New York

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and commemorate the distinguished histories of the communities which comprise the noble body of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 130th Anniversary of Ozone Park; and

WHEREAS, A great community, Ozone Park consists of hard working people and small businesses that serve the area and residents who truly care about the neighborhood; early history records indicate that the western part of Long Island was settled around 1660 by Dutch and English settlers due to a land grant by the Dutch West India Company; settlers established themselves alongside the Rockaway and Jameco Native American tribes who were already in the area; and

WHEREAS, The land around Ozone Park was dotted with farms until 1882, when developers Benjamin Hitchcock and Charles C. Denton converted farmland into tracts of land with homes that were sold to people looking to enjoy the "ozone" or the clean, fresh air of the ocean and bay that washed over the area, namely "Ozone Park"; and

WHEREAS, In 1907, developer David Leahy began buying up farms in the area to build small, single-family homes; he envisioned that the idea of refreshing breezes blowing in from the Atlantic Ocean to a park-like community would lure buyers; a planned expansion of the Long Island Railroad through the community made it accessible to the city; and

WHEREAS, Early residents were the first to experience the thrill of riding the elevated train over the water to spend the day at Rockaway Beach; Benjamin Hitchcock and Charles Denton expanded the community south, east and north, doubling its size; also, in 1889, Ozone Park was given its own post office; and

WHEREAS, The year 1896 saw the first library service at the Ozone Park Free Circulating Library, founded by the local Women's Club; on January 1, 1901, the library united with the new Queens Borough Public Library,

and it relocated many times, but every location was near its current spot on Rockaway Boulevard, near Crossbay Boulevard; and WHEREAS, The neighborhood has traditionally been known for its affordable, middle- and working-class housing; it is very popular because of the easy and inexpensive train commute into Manhattan; and WHEREAS, Through much of the 20th century, Ozone Park had been known as a tight-knit, Italian-American enclave, but has since become home to immigrants from South America, South Asia and the West Indies, turning it into a multicultural melting pot; and WHEREAS, Ozone Park is known as the home of Aqueduct Racetrack, the largest thoroughbred racing track in the country, built with a seating capacity of 80,000; it now shares its vast acreage with the city's newest tourist attraction and first casino, Resorts World New York; and WHEREAS, JFK Airport has a runway where the northern end is reputed to be the ancient burial ground of the Rockaway Tribe and the repository of many of their arrowheads and spearheads; and WHEREAS, Wilbur E. Colyer Square, at Rockaway Blvd., 120th Ave. and 133rd St., is named for a 17-year-old volunteer in World War I; he was killed and posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for Valor at Verdun, the first and youngest Queens resident so honored; and WHEREAS, Byrne Place, at North Conduit Avenue between 130th Place and 134th Street, was named to honor NYPD Officer Edward R. Byrne, killed on February 26, 1988, while in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, Many other notable individuals of Ozone Park, include: Beat Generation writer of ON THE ROAD Jack Kerouac; Space Shuttle astronaut Charles Camarda; Broadway star Bernadette Peters; pop star Cyndi Lauper; 1950s Doo Wop group The Capris; The Sopranos actor Ray Abruzzo; Major League Baseball player John Frascatore; pitcher Neal Heaton; New York Mets relief pitcher Pedro Beato; 1960 Olympic figure-skating champion Carol Heiss; middleweight boxer Jimmy Herring; professional wrestler Peter Polaco; actors Joe Lo Truglio and Jack Lord; and 1972 Nobel Prize winner Gerald Edelman; and

WHEREAS, Remaining fruitful over the ebb and flow of decades of growth and change, Ozone Park continues its commitment to enhancing the quality of life of its citizens, ensuring a positive business, institutional and educational climate, and providing all essential services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 130th Anniversary of Ozone Park, Queens, New York.