

2015-K638

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 325th Anniversary of the first settlers of Deerpark, New York

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and commemorate the proud and 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 325th Anniversary of the first settlers of the Town of Deerpark, New York, to be feted throughout the year, culminating with a colonial celebration at their Annual Open House in September of 2015; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Deerpark is a rural town in the southwestern corner of Orange County; it is nestled among lakes, streams, rivers and mountains and is bounded by the Delaware, Neversink, and Mongaup Rivers, the Shawangunk Mountains, and the wetlands of the Basha Kill; and

WHEREAS, This land was the frontier of early America; a settler named McDaniel enclosed a small tract of land with a fence made of brush; some of his neighbors called it his "Deerpark"; subsequently, the entire area was known by that name; and

WHEREAS, Today, seven hamlets, including: Cahoonzie, Cuddebackville, Godeffroy, Huguenot, Rio, Sparrowbush and Westbrookville make up the Town of Deerpark; and

WHEREAS, The peaceful Lenni Lenape Indians were the first inhabitants of this area; Chief Penhorn and his tribe inhabited about 780 acres of fine natural meadow land on the east side of the Neversink River; and

WHEREAS, In 1690, William Tietsoort, the first European inhabitant in the valley, was asked to move here by the Lenni Lenape to build a blacksmith shop to make much needed tools; and

WHEREAS, Seven years later, a 1,200 acre patent of land was granted to Jacob Codebeck, Thomas Swartwout, Anthony Swartwout, Bernardus Swartwout, Jan Tyse, Peter Germar (Gumaer) and David Jamison, sturdy Dutch and Huguenot farming families who lived peacefully with the Lenni Lenape Indians; and

WHEREAS, With the early rumblings of the French and Indian War, the local residents were asked to form a militia in preparation for the possibility of war; this effort broke the trust of the Lenni Lenape Indians who, subsequently, moved west to the Ohio Territory; and

WHEREAS, Many families traveled along the Old Mine Road, America's oldest 100 mile road, to settle in this fertile valley watered by pristine rivers; since the boundary line between New York and New Jersey was still undetermined, residents on both sides fought and destroyed each other's homes and property during The New Jersey-New York Border War; finally, on September 1, 1773, the present boundary line was established by England; and

WHEREAS, On October 13, 1778, during the American War of Independence, Colonel Joseph Brant and his raiders approached by way of an old trail from the Mongaup River to Huguenot, attacking from south to north ending at Fort DeWitt in Cuddebackville; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Joseph Brant returned again on July 20, 1779, bringing with him 27 Tories and 60 Indians to fight against the settlers; it was this raid which led to the major Battle at Minisink Ford, where many local militiamen lost their lives; and

WHEREAS, In 1798, the counties that we know today were created by the New York State Legislature; Deerpark was established from both the Town of Mamakating, and the Town of Minisink; and

WHEREAS, The construction of the D & H Canal, from 1828-1898, dramatically changed the Town of Deerpark; new industries were created and old ones expanded; and

WHEREAS, Quarries, tanneries, lumber mills, boat yards, supply stores,

blacksmith shops, and carpenter shops were busy places along the canal; homes were built making schools, churches and public buildings necessary and today, many of these buildings remain throughout the town; and WHEREAS, The Town of Deerpark changed once again with the advent of the railroad; in 1868, the Monticello & Port Jervis Railroad Company started to bring tourists to enjoy the natural beauty of the rivers and mountains, therefore, a thriving resort industry arose; and WHEREAS, The railroad was also instrumental in making commercial dairying in the Neversink Valley a viable occupation; each farm within a convenient distance of a railroad had a milk stop to pick up cans of milk to ship to New York City; and WHEREAS, The automobile brought even more people to the town; among them was D. W. Griffith who, between 1909 and 1915, made many films using the majestic mountains and flowing rivers as natural backdrops; and WHEREAS, Geography remains an important part of the town's identity; camps care for natural areas and teach environmental education courses, The Nature Conservancy has extensive holdings of environmentally fragile sections of the Neversink River, the Orange County Land Trust and the Basherkill State Wildlife Management Area protect sections of the Basha Kill wetlands, and the Orange County Parks Department has developed The D&H Canal Park to preserve one of the few sections of the Canal which still holds water; and WHEREAS, Remaining fruitful over the ebb and flow of decades of growth and change, the Town of Deerpark, under the luminous leadership of Supervisor Gary Spears, 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 325th Anniversary of the first settlers of Deerpark, New York, and to enthusiastically salute its residents as they celebrate

this auspicious occasion, recognizing the significance of the role it continues to play in the life of the community of the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Town of Deerpark, New York.

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