

2017-J967

Senate Resolution No. 967

BY: Senator HAMILTON

COMMEMORATING the 150th Anniversary of Prospect
Park in Brooklyn, New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the continuing welfare of the citizens of the State of New York is greatly enriched and reliably served by the purposeful endeavors of those organizations committed to the preservation of the natural world, the enrichment of knowledge of local and global wildlife, and the promotion of environmental citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Prospect Park to be celebrated on Saturday, April 1, 2017, at Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York; and

WHEREAS, Established in 1867, Prospect Park is a 585-acre public park located in the New York City borough of Brooklyn; it was designed by the influential landscape architecture team of Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux; and

WHEREAS, This architecture team was essential in transforming 585-acres of remnant forest and rocky farmland into a landscape whose beauty, though manufactured, would nurture the mind, body and even the fabric of society; and

WHEREAS, Within Prospect Park, there are seven playgrounds, some with water features, a 3.35 mile loop for bicycling, a carousel open from April to October, a 90-acre Long Meadow, the Woodland Ravine, meandering paths with scenic outlooks and a watercourse which features waterfalls and springs as well as a 60-acre lake; and

WHEREAS, Following the Great Depression, Robert Moses, the New York City Parks Commissioner, leveraged funds available through President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Public Works Administration to launch a number of development projects, including Prospect Park; his vision was to view parks as settings for active recreation; and

WHEREAS, The projects completed under Robert Moses' guidance included the Prospect Park Zoo, new playgrounds around Prospect Park's perimeter, the extensive renovation of the Park drives and the construction of the Bandshell as well the Kate Wollman Memorial Skating Rink, which is currently the site of the LeFrak Center at Lakeside; and

WHEREAS, During the 1970s, New York fell under a significant fiscal crisis, and Prospect Park's landscapes and structures collapsed into serious disrepair; less than two million people visited a year, the lowest in the Park's history; and

WHEREAS, After the bronze sculpture of Columbia at Grand Army Plaza fell over, symbolizing the general neglect of Prospect Park and its immediate surroundings, a group of concerned local citizens began lobbying for responsible stewardship of the Park; and

WHEREAS, Due to the concerned citizen's persistence, the Borough President took their concerns to Mayor, Edward Koch, who, with the help of Parks Commissioner, Gordon Davis, developed a plan to restore the Park; in 1980, Tupper Thomas was appointed the first Prospect Park

Administrator to oversee the restoration efforts; and

WHEREAS, During this time, a group of private citizens working with Parks Commissioner, Henry Stern, founded a non-profit organization to work with the City in leading Prospect Park's transformation; with Parks Administrator, Tupper Thomas, as President, the Alliance offered a new way for the public and private sectors to join as partners in a common cause; and

WHEREAS, Starting with the special campaign to restore the Park's 1912 Carousel, the resulting refurbishment became a symbol of Prospect Park's rebirth; through volunteer initiatives and community programs, Tupper Thomas was able to cultivate tremendous support from the public; and

WHEREAS, In the 1990s, the Alliance embarked on an ambitious woodlands restoration; more than 3,500 cubic yards of topsoil was used to stabilize slopes and 160,000 plants, sourced from within 60 miles of Prospect Park, were introduced and approximately 35,000 aquatic plants were added to provide food and nesting habitats; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, the Alliance announced a radical redesign which would integrate the rustic aesthetic of Olmstead and Vaux, the recreational demands of the public, and the energy efficiency requirements of a modern public space; and

WHEREAS, With the collaboration of the prestigious architectural firm, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien and the Alliance's Chief Landscape Architect Christian Zimmerman, the \$74 million project restored Prospect Park, which is considered once again, one of the nation's premier public parks, and a treasured Brooklyn green space, with more than 10 million visitors each year; and

WHEREAS, Today, Prospect Park is home to 50 species of butterflies, more than 30,000 trees, at least 18 species of fish, and more than 200 species of birds; it has brought beauty and pleasure to the residents of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the seasons, Prospect Park is a destination much appreciated by the residents of the State of New York and visitors who seek the historical, cultural, and recreational resources of the area; it is a source of pride and community heritage to all the people of Brooklyn; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Prospect Park Alliance.