

2015-J6121

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Duke Devlin upon the occasion of retiring after many years of distinguished service as the Site Interpreter of the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts on June 22, 2016

WHEREAS, From time to time we take note of certain individuals whom we wish to recognize for their valued contributions and to publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Duke Devlin upon the occasion of retiring after many years of distinguished service as the Site Interpreter of the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts to be celebrated at a Luncheon held in his honor on Wednesday, June 22, 2016; and

WHEREAS, In 1969, 27 year-old Duke Devlin was living in Armarillo, Texas, growing soybeans and sweet potatoes when he first heard about the Woodstock Music and Arts fair; the brochure promised good music, an Indian village, a petting zoo and fresh air; college campuses were buzzing about this grandiose festival with a veritable who's-who of the music world slated to play; and

WHEREAS, After hitchhiking with a friend, Duke Devlin arrived in upstate New York a week early with only 50 cents in his pocket; he got a job selling burgers from a stand at the top of Hurd Road and joined Hog Farm, the semi-official "Please Force" run by Wavy Gravy, hired to keep order at the site during the concert; and

WHEREAS, 400,000 people showed up for the 32-band concert that was held August 15-18, 1969; they were camped out in the Town of Bethel, enjoying the peace, love, harmony and mud on Max Yasgur's 600-acre farm; and

WHEREAS, The bands who performed at the legendary music festival who

were responsible for changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people included: Richie Havens; Arlo Guthrie; Joan Baez; Santana; the Grateful Dead; Janis Joplin; Creedence Clearwater Revival; Jefferson Airplane; Blood, Sweat and Tears; The Band; Jimi Hendrix; Jerry Garcia; Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; and

WHEREAS, What Duke Devlin experienced was three days of nonstop music, fun and camaraderie; he gave out oatmeal with sugar and raisins to the masses and rubbed shoulders with rock legends such as Jimi Hendrix and Jerry Garcia; and

WHEREAS, After it was over, Duke Devlin remained in Bethel to help with the cleanup of the soon to be historic concert site; then, to save up enough money to leave, he got a job milking cows, and met a pretty girl; he grew fond of the Bethel area and, the hippie who came to Woodstock, decided to stay; and

WHEREAS, Duke Devlin eventually got married and helped run a farm stand for many years with his ex-wife; he also worked as a maintenance man with local schools; and

WHEREAS, Duke Devlin worked with the media for the 1994 and 1999 Woodstock anniversary concerts as what he calls a "token hippie," providing an authoritative Aquarian voice for reporters; and

WHEREAS, The unofficial spokesperson for Woodstock for many years, in 2006, Duke Devlin became the official Site Interpreter after the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts opened its doors; he tells tourists what it was like at the legendary festival through his stories and fun facts; and

WHEREAS, Duke Devlin, who recently accepted a STAR award from the Sullivan County Visitors Association for his contributions to the community at large, was the guest of honor in a public forum hosted by Thunder 102 radio's Mike Sakell and Paul Ciliberto in the museum theater at Bethel Woods where he held court in a lively discussion with Museum Director Wade Lawrence, former Town of Bethel Supervisor Alan Scott and

former Town of Thompson Supervisor Anthony Cellini, both of whom were actively involved with the original site of the 1969 Woodstock Music Festival and its transformation into what has become Bethel Woods; and WHEREAS, A mainstay of Sullivan County, this extraordinary septuagenarian is well-known and respected by many for his profound wisdom and first-hand knowledge of what truly happened at Woodstock in August of 1969; and

WHEREAS, Even after five decades, this true hippie-at-heart can still smell the rain and the mud, as well as feel the love, the sharing, the caring and genuine sense of community; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to express its highest admiration for Duke Devlin and to wish him continued success in all his future endeavors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Duke Devlin upon the occasion of retiring after many years of distinguished service as the Site Interpreter of the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Duke Devlin.