

BY: Senator RHOADS

COMMEMORATING the 90th Anniversary of Bethpage
State Park in Old Bethpage, 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, 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 90th Anniversary of Bethpage State Park; and

WHEREAS, Established in 1934, Bethpage State Park is a 1,477-acre public park located in Old Bethpage, NY; and

WHEREAS, In 1912, the Park was developed from an estate owned by Benjamin Franklin Yoakum and the Yoakum family and other surrounding properties in Farmingdale; the Yoakum family leased their estate to the Lenox Hills Corporation in 1923 which subsequently built and opened the private Lenox Hills Country Club; the park started as a single 18-hole golf course, designed by prolific course designer Devereux Emmet; and

WHEREAS, After Yoakum died in 1929, the State of New York, under the Long Island State Park Commission, purchased and assumed management of the property in May 1934; Robert Moses, Chairman of the New York State Council of Parks, named the park "Bethpage State Park" after the Bethpage Purchase, a land deal with Native Americans, made by his ancestor Thomas Powell in 1687; and

WHEREAS, Once acquired by the state and designated a state park, famed golf course architect A.W. Tillinghast was hired to design and oversee construction of three new golf courses (the Black, Red, and Blue) as well as modify the original Lenox Hills course, later known as the Green Course; due to the increasing popularity and demand for golf, the Yellow Course designed by Alfred Tull was opened in 1958; and

WHEREAS, Bethpage State Park is now home to five world-class golf courses, including the world-renowned Black Course which was the site of the U.S. Open Championship in 2002 and 2009; the Barclays in 2012 and 2016; the PGA Championship in 2019; and will host golf's pre-eminent event, the Ryder Cup in September 2025; and

WHEREAS, With approximately 15,000 golf courses of all different types and sizes in the United States, the Black Course at Bethpage State Park has consistently ranked among the top 100 Greatest Golf Courses in America per Golf Digest for nearly twenty years; and

WHEREAS, Visitors also flock to the park to use the park's picnic facilities, playing fields, tennis courts, bridle paths, hiking and

biking trails and cross-county skiing trails; the Polo Grounds at Bethpage State Park, built in 1934, also hosted the 1994 U.S. Open Polo Championship Finals; and

WHEREAS, Bethpage State Park is now one of the most popular and cherished public parks in the nation, a mecca for public golf, and a testament to the beauty and history of Nassau County; over 200,000 rounds are consistently played annually on the five courses at Bethpage, all of which start from the Clubhouse area. The Park also houses a restaurant and catering facilities, a Golf Pro Shop and driving range; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the decades, Bethpage State Park has become a destination much appreciated by the residents of Nassau County and 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 Nassau County and New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of Bethpage State Park in Old Bethpage, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Heritage Club at Bethpage and the Nassau County Executive.