

BY: M. of A. Raga

HONORING the life and legacy of Tadeusz Kosciuszko

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those patriotic and courageous individuals who have given so much of themselves in times of war for the advancement of the democratic ideals and principles of freedom which we cherish; and

WHEREAS, In keeping with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor the life and legacy of Tadeusz Kosciuszko, a Polish general, engineer, and revolutionary who fought for American liberty and independence; and

WHEREAS, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, at the age of 30, volunteered of his own free will and at his own expense to cross the Atlantic in 1776 to participate in the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS, In 1776, the President of the Continental Congress, John Hancock, appointed Kosciuszko as an officer, stating: "Reposing especial trust and confidence in your patriotism, valor, conduct, and fidelity, we do by these presents constitute and appoint you to be an Engineer with the rank of Colonel in the Army of the United States"; and

WHEREAS, Kosciuszko was one of George Washington's most accomplished military engineers and strategists during the Revolutionary War; he played a critical role in the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga, widely regarded as the turning point of the war; in 1777, he designed and constructed fortifications at Bemis Heights overlooking the Hudson River, which significantly contributed to the Continental Army's success; and

WHEREAS, In 1778, General George Washington directed Brigadier General Tadeusz Kosciuszko to design and oversee the construction of fortifications at West Point; working with Continental soldiers, he built forts, batteries, and redoubts, and engineered a 150-ton iron chain across the Hudson River to control British naval movement; West Point was never captured by British forces, and Kosciuszko's vision contributed to the eventual establishment of the United States Military Academy at that site; and

WHEREAS, Kosciuszko was an ardent advocate of liberty and equality, declaring that "we are all equal"; Thomas Jefferson described him as "as pure a son of liberty as I have ever known, and of that liberty, which is to go to all, and not to the few or the rich alone"; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of his exemplary service, Kosciuszko was promoted to Brigadier General in 1783 and granted American citizenship, along with land and financial compensation, in appreciation of his contributions to the American Revolutionary War; and

WHEREAS, True to his ideals, Kosciuszko encouraged Thomas Jefferson

and others to emancipate enslaved persons and championed education and equality for all; at the conclusion of the war, before returning to Poland, he entrusted his American estate to Jefferson to support these causes; and

WHEREAS, Today, Polish communities unite annually to honor the life and legacy of Tadeusz Kosciuszko through meaningful ceremony and tradition; and

WHEREAS, The Polish community of Maspeth and Western Queens recognizes the contributions of Tadeusz Kosciuszko with an annual wreath laying ceremony at the Kosciuszko Bridge on October 15th, the anniversary of his death; and

WHEREAS, A bronze memorial dedicated to Tadeusz Kosciuszko's historic achievements, notable sacrifices, and enduring spirit can be found on the Maspeth side of the renowned Kosciuszko Bridge; and

WHEREAS, Tadeusz Kosciuszko's contributions to American independence, his devotion to liberty, and the values he espoused merit recognition and commemoration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the life and legacy of Tadeusz Kosciuszko; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Polish Community Center of Albany, Dobra Polska Szkola Foundation, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York, Saratoga County Historian's Office, and members of the Polish American community of New York.