

No. R-32. House concurrent resolution commemorating the restoration and sesquicentennial anniversary of the historic Brandon Town Hall.

(H.C.R.25)

Offered by: Representative Acinapura of Brandon

Offered by: Senators Ayer and Giard

Whereas, 150 years ago in 1861, as Vermonters were about to embark to defend the Union in the Civil War, the town of Brandon opened a glorious new Town Hall as a civic and cultural showplace that was the envy of the surrounding towns, and

Whereas, this impressive architectural gem, with its prominent Doric portico, served as the new home for the conduct of Brandon's municipal affairs such as selectboard meetings, annual and special town meetings, and election day voting, and

Whereas, although the transactions related to town governance were certainly of great import to the local citizenry, the Brandon Town Hall also became a grand community gathering place and performance venue, and

Whereas, films, live theatrical productions, including a New York City-based-theater company, which established a summer residency in the 1950s, and even a bustling flea market were among the building's eagerly anticipated events that drew spectators from beyond Brandon's borders, and

Whereas, in 1979, after 120 years of faithfully serving the town in many roles, the Brandon Town Hall was shuttered as an aged and deteriorating grand edifice which was too costly to maintain, and for nearly the rest of the 20th century it sat idle, but hardly forgotten, and

Whereas, in 1998, a new era dawned when a group of Brandon residents, intent on dusting off the cobwebs and restoring the building's rightful role in the community, established the Friends of the Brandon Town Hall, and

Whereas, this forward-looking, yet historically minded organization, hired the architectural firm of Robert Carl Williams and Associates to supervise the Brandon Town Hall's 21st century renaissance, and

Whereas, in addition to the State of Vermont, the Walter Cerf Community Fund, the Preservation Trust, the Freeman Foundation, the Vermont Arts Council, the First Brandon Bank, and the National Bank of Middlebury, many other businesses and individuals donated funds, materials, or services in the cause of raising the hall's curtains once more, and

Whereas, the improvements to the hall were numerous, including: adding beautiful marble steps at the entrance that Omya Inc. donated; restoring the lobby; and installing a handicapped accessible lift, a fire suppression system, an audio-visual system with a theatre-size movie screen, a high definition projector with surround sound, and new curtains that will reveal grand entertainment extravaganzas, and

Whereas, these enhancements enabled the Brandon Town Hall to resume its rightful place in the community when it hosted the premier of Gene Childer's *Vermont Sketches* in August 2008 and various performances by the Brandon Town Players, and

Whereas, in anticipation of the sesquicentennial anniversary of this grand edifice in 2011, the Friends of the Brandon Town Hall is proceeding with the installation of a new heating and cooling system and other interior improvements that will enable the building to be in use 12 months per year and provide maximum comfort to its appreciative patrons, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the restoration and sesquicentennial anniversary of the historic Brandon Town Hall, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Mei Mei Brown, Chair of the Friends of the Brandon Town Hall.