



OSWEGO COUNTY LEGISLATURE

County Office Building ▪ 46 East Bridge Street ▪ Oswego, NY 13126
Phone (315)349-8230 ▪ Fax (315)349-8237 www.oswegocounty.com

TO: Leg. Shawn Doyle, Vice Chair; Leg. Mary Chesbro.; Leg. Roy Reehil;
Leg. Mary Schadt; Leg. Morris Sorbello; Leg. Bradley Trudell

FROM: Leg. Tim Stahl, Chair

SUBJ: **SPECIAL Economic Development and Planning Committee Meeting**

DATE: February 14, 2018

Thursday, February 15, 2018

1:40 p.m.

4th Floor Conference Room "E"
County Office Building

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

(Tentative)

1. Resolution acknowledging the historical significance of the Fort Ontario Military Complex and supporting its elevation to national monument status

Resolution No. _____

February 15, 2018

**RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
FORT ONTARIO MILITARY COMPLEX AND SUPPORTING ITS ELEVATION TO
NATIONAL MONUMENT STATUS**

By Legislators Tim Stahl and Tom Drumm:

WHEREAS, the 260 year old Fort Ontario Military Complex, with its rich history which ranks it among our nation's greatest and proudest assets; and

WHEREAS, Fort Ontario is the only military site in the nation that has played a role in nearly every conflict we as have been engaged in since the French & Indian War, and

WHEREAS, Fort Ontario was the site of three battles and served a strategic role during the French and Indian War by figuring highly in three of the five decisive campaigns leading to the end of French occupation of Canada; and

WHEREAS, Fort Ontario was a British post during the Revolutionary War, sheltering loyalist refugees fleeing persecution in the Mohawk Valley in 1775, serving as the base for the failed 1777 invasion of the Mohawk Valley, and later raids on rebel and Oneida farms and villages in New York, and was the objective of the last campaign of the war ordered by Washington in 1783; and

WHEREAS, Fort Ontario was turned over to the US in 1796, and during the War of 1812 guarded the supply route to our Navy base at Sackets Harbor and campaigns on the Niagara frontier, and was attacked unsuccessfully in 1813, but fell to the British in 1814 after a stubborn defense by its outnumbered defenders; and

WHEREAS, Fort Ontario was rebuilt by the US in 1839 to protect the strategic Erie-Oswego Canal system when a third war with Great Britain threatened along the northern frontier with British-held Canada; and

WHEREAS, Fort Ontario served as a recruiting and training center for the Union Army during the Civil War, and guarded the northern frontier from invasion from British-held Canada in the event of an alliance between Great Britain and the Confederacy; and

WHEREAS, in 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt recognized the strategic importance of the site and modernized Fort Ontario into a battalion size infantry post to meet the broader needs of the US as an emerging world power; and

WHEREAS, from 1908-1911, a battalion of the 24th U.S. Infantry Regiment, “the famed Buffalo Soldiers,” were welcomed at Oswego and garrisoned the post; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, the post was converted into the largest General Hospital in the US; where ambulance companies were trained, where wounded and sick soldiers from the fighting were brought for treatment and rehabilitation, and victims of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic received care; and

WHEREAS, in 1941 the 369th Infantry Regiment, the famed “Harlem Hellfighters,” was sent to Fort Ontario for training and conversion to an Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment, a milestone in the Civil Rights movement and eventual desegregation of the army; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, from 1944 to 1946, the post served as the only Emergency Refugee Shelter in the US for mostly Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust, established by Executive Order from President Franklin D. Roosevelt; and

WHEREAS, in 1946 the fort was turned over to NYS and housed discharged GI’s and their families until 1953, when restoration as a state historic site began; and

WHEREAS, in 1959 the army established a Reserve Center on a portion of the old Military Reservation, and modernized it in 2004 to meet the changing needs of the U S as an established world power in the 21st century, and which is now garrisoned by the 444th Engineer Company, 479th Engineer Battalion, veterans of campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan in the War on Terrorism;

NOW, therefore, in recognition of the unique and important role that Fort Ontario has played in our nation’s history, and in world history; be it

RESOLVED, that the Oswego County Legislature fully supports the efforts to elevate the status of Fort Ontario including approximately 65 acres of various lands and buildings associated therewith; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this body believes that this site qualifies as a national historic landmark and that it should be considered for conversion to a national park and explored as a possible candidate for designation as a world heritage site; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature provide a certified copy of this Resolution to Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senator Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Congressman John Katko, Congresswoman Claudia Tenney, Senator Patty Ritchie, Assemblyman Will Barclay, Assemblyman Robert Oakes.

ROLL CALL

YES: _____ NO: _____ ABSENT: _____