

DEAR GUESTS, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, VISITORS, ESTEEMED ELKS, AND ESPECIALLY SOON-TO-BECOME NEW CITIZENS. I AM PLEASED TO WELCOME YOU TO SOMERVILLE AS WE GATHER ON FLAG DAY, 2019.

THIS DAY HAS BEEN CELEBRATED SINCE 1916 WHEN IT WAS FIRST PROCLAIMED BY PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON, JUST AS THE HORROR OF WORLD WAR ONE WAS ABOUT TO ENGULF THE UNITED STATES. THEN, IN 1946, AS OUR BRAVE SOLDIERS RETURNED VICTORIOUS FROM WORLD WAR TWO, CONGRESS ESTABLISHED JUNE 14 AS THE DAY TO HONOR THE SYMBOL THAT ADVANCED THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM TO THE FAR REACHES OF EUROPE AND ASIA, ONE THAT MARKED THE GRAVES OF SO MANY HEROIC MEN AND WOMEN WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE ON LAND, AT SEA AND IN THE AIR. WE REMEMBER THEM TODAY AS WE HONOR THE STARS AND STRIPES THEY FOLLOWED SO SELFLESSLY.

THIS YEAR HOLDS SPECIAL MEANING FOR OLD GLORY. AS NEXT MONTH MARKS THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF APOLLO ELEVEN AND THE FIRST MOON LANDING. I REMEMBER VIVIDLY, AS YOU DO IF YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH, BEING GLUED TO MY FAMILY'S EIGHTEEN INCH, LOW RESOLUTION, BLACK AND WHITE TELEVISION SET WATCHING THE REMARKABLE PICTURES OF NEIL ARMSTRONG AND BUZZ ALDRIN ACTUALLY WALKING ON THE MOON AS WE SAW THEM LIVE. AMONG THE MANY TASKS THE ASTRONAUTS PERFORMED DURING THEIR TWENTY-ONE HOUR STAY ON THE MOON, THE MOST PHOTOGRAPHED IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE PLANTING OF THE UNITED STATES FLAG IN THE LUNAR SOIL A QUARTER OF A MILLION MILES FROM EARTH. TODAY, THAT FLAG, AS WELL AS THE ONES FROM FIVE MORE APOLLO FLIGHTS ,STILL STANDS IN SILENT AND UNMOVING WITNESS TO THE

VALUES OF PEACE AND FREEDOM THAT WE AS AMERICANS CHERISH SO DEARLY.

WHEN TODAY'S CEREMONY ENDS, REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN AND HEARD ON OUR COURTHOUSE LAWN. WHEN YOU DRIVE PAST PUBLIC BUILDINGS OR PRIVATE HOMES FLYING THE FLAG, REFLECT. WHEN YOU ATTEND A PARADE AND THE COLORS PASS BY, REFLECT. WHEN YOU VISIT A CEMETERY AND SEE FLAGS SCATTERED ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE, REFLECT. AND FINALLY, WHEN YOU GAZE UP AT THE MOON ON A DARK AND CLOUDLESS NIGHT, REFLECT. YOU JUST MIGHT SEE SIX DISTANT RED, WHITE AND BLUE POINTS OF HOPE SHINING DOWN ON US ALL. THANK YOU.

MAYOR DENNIS SULLIVAN

JUNE 14, 2019