

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, After 40 remarkable years, Berlin Nightclub located at 954 W Belmont had its final chapter in November; and,

WHEREAS, Berlin's owners, Jim Schuman and Jo Webster, wrote, "The party ended at 5 am, November 19th, 2023, nearly forty years and more than 10,000 nights from when it all began," in their farewell letter to family, friends, and patrons throughout the years; and,

WHEREAS, opening in 1983, both Jim and Jo could have never imagined just how iconic the nightclub's reputation would become; and,

WHEREAS, co-founded by Tim Sullivan and Shirley Mooney, Berlin from the beginning was unapologetically itself, coined as the "neighborhood bar of the future"; and,

WHEREAS, originally taking inspiration from the cabaret clubs of the Weimar Republic, in those early years Berlin was equally parts a political organizing space and after party; and,

WHEREAS, the club cut its teeth on cultivating DJ sets based around dark wave and post-punk, setting themselves apart from the cookie-cutter pop scene played in other nightclubs; and,

WHEREAS, for the LGBTQ+ community, the bar was a sanctuary, especially for the trans community; a place where many could celebrate themselves without fear; and,

WHEREAS, the nightclub became one of the first video bars in Chicago, now a standard of queer bars and clubs; the club was a hub for late-night dance parties, featuring underground artists and drag queens new on the scene; and,

WHEREAS, however, Berlin's popularity also attracted mainstream celebrities including the likes of Elton John, Donna Karan, Lizzo, and drag star JoJo Baby; and,

WHEREAS, but what made Berlin truly special was that it really was a space for everyone, when you were at Berlin, the only thing that could put you in a bad mood were the lights coming on signaling your night of revelry was over; and,

WHEREAS, St. Sukie de la Croix, an iconic writer and photographer, was quoted saying, "It was like an island of misfit toys. Everybody who didn't fit into other gay bars went to Berlin because everybody went to Berlin"; and,

WHEREAS, that is what everyone will miss the most, the sense of community that came with stepping through Berlin's doors; and,

WHEREAS, so now it is time to thank all who supported Berlin for so many years, the staff, the owners, the patrons, and those who were only able to visit for one night but saw magic, even just for a moment; and,

WHEREAS, both Jim and Jo put it best, "The doors are locked. The music is silenced and our dreams are now memories. We hope you made some memories with us and that you smile when they visit you"; and,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this 13th day of December, 2023 do hereby celebrate the 40 years of Berlin Nightclub's history and extend our deepest thanks towards owners Jo and Jim; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that hard copies of this resolution will be provided to Jim and Jo to honor their legacy and hard work over these years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Lawson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bennett Lawson
44th Ward