

Music Hall available for \$1 a year, if...

By Roberta Brandes Gratz

Alton G. Marshall has offered to turn over Radio City Music Hall for \$1 a year to anyone with a workable solution to keep it alive.

At the same time, the Music Hall executive defied any of the individuals and groups fighting to save it from extinction to come up with a viable economic solution acceptable to him.

The challenge was not too different from what Marshall has been saying since the announcement that the palatial theater would close April 12.

But, he added this time, Rockefeller Center would be willing to "break even" and lease Radio City for \$1 a year—with rent, taxes and maintenance covered—if given a satisfactory proposal.

Marshall was interviewed yesterday outside a City Hall hearing room.

There the largest, most prestigious group ever assembled on behalf of preservation came to urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate Radio City an official landmark.

Robert J. Dryfoos, counsel to Lt. Gov. Krupsak and mastermind of the day-long testimony, responded quickly to Marshall.

"We will come forward with a group of people who will be willing and able to accept that challenge and suggest a two-year trial," Dryfoos said.

Both Dryfoos and Marshall attached stiff conditions. Dryfoos said landmark designa-

tion by the commission must come first because "only then will public leverage be insured, rather than leaving it simply to Marshall to decide if a proposal is acceptable and workable."

Marshall had argued in his public testimony that such designation could be the "last nail in the Music Hall's coffin" because no one would want to work out a deal with both Rockefeller Center management and a city agency.

He also repeated that the prospective programming must be realistic and in keeping with the "tradition and spirit" of the hall.

During seven hours of public testimony, more than 50 people either spoke or had

statements submitted in support of official designation. Conceivably the commission could vote to designate in executive session two weeks from now.

Designation would buy a year of grace for public and private groups to come up with an economic solution to save the 45-year-old Art Deco wonder.

Marshall announced he would challenge the commission in court if it votes to designate.

He said there were alternative uses he could "conceive of" but reiterated that no one had made any offers.

"All I hear is talk," he said, and "we're the ones who have spent \$500,000 trying to work things out."

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