

UPPER BROOKVILLE

VILLAGE 'NOMADS' NO MORE

After decades of temporary options, Village Hall under construction at former police barracks

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When Upper Brookville officials conducted village business in the 1930s, it was on occasion at New York City social clubs or the Wolver Hollow Road home of Mayor Morris W. Kellogg.

Back then, when the mayor gathered with “confreres,” or professional colleagues, meetings would start at 5 p.m. and end a half-hour later when the butler arrived with martinis, according to a “History of Upper Brookville, 1932-1982” compiled by village historian John L. Rawlinson.

In the decades that followed, less-glamorous summits would be held in basements, now-defunct school buildings and structures at the Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, including the carriage house there.

“Starting in 1932, the village held its meetings in temporary spaces,” Mayor Elliot Conway said in an interview. “We’ve been moving like nomads, seeking the stability that comes with a permanent location.”

Now, the Village of Upper Brookville is renovating a former police precinct to become a new \$1.5 million Village Hall that will serve as a permanent meeting spot for its residents. Construction is expected to conclude by early November, officials said.

The plan is to expand a police precinct the Village of Old Brookville had used until 2022 by about 13 feet in one direction and 8 feet in another. The Village of Upper Brookville has owned the property for decades.

It will serve myriad purposes — as Upper Brookville’s Village Hall, a station for the Muttontown-Upper Brookville Police Department, a disaster recovery site and as storage for village records, officials said. The village will apply reserve funds, grants from the federal American Rescue Plan Act, as well as state and county grants for the project.



Upper Brookville Mayor Elliot Conway stands outside the future Village Hall. Renovations are expected to be completed in November.

New Village Hall

■ For decades, the village has been without a central meeting spot. Officials met at social clubs and or a mayor’s home, a tradition dating back to the 1930s. In recent years, officials convened at the carriage house at Planting Fields Arboretum, and in now-defunct school buildings.

■ Upper Brookville is building the new Village Hall at the Village of Old Brookville’s former police headquarters.

■ The project is expected to cost about \$1.5 million.

Small cottage

After Conway was elected mayor in 2016, the village began scouting locations for a permanent meeting space, Newsday previously reported. However, earlier estimates to build a new structure on land long-owned by the village ballooned. So, the village changed course to look at land it had leased for \$1 a year for decades, Conway said.

“In 1932, there was a small



RENDERING

The new Village Hall in Upper Brookville will serve many functions.

cottage here. It came up for sale and the first village trustees said, ‘We should buy this for some future use,’” Conway said of the property now known as 5701 Northern Blvd.

In the 1950s, the building was used for the then-six-village police department, he said. The building expanded in the 1980s. But it has been vacant after the Old Brookville Police Department disbanded in 2022.

Conway said meetings were once held in New York City so-

cial clubs where the village’s board members belonged. Upper Brookville Village meetings were held in a now-demolished elementary school, with hearings in the gymnasium. Some board meetings were held in a previous mayor’s basement. Meetings later moved to the carriage house of Planting Fields Arboretum, Newsday has reported, but Conway said the village was flooded out there twice and had to send its records to be freeze-dried.

Upper Brookville owns the plot across the street from the new Village Hall and is considering options there, including a parking lot, officials said.

Potential for growth

Mike Franco, an architect with the Farmingdale-based Studio 287, said plans for the project have been kicked around for a few years. The main floor of the facility will be around 3,300 square feet and the basement will span 2,200 square feet, Franco said.

Peter Pappas, a village trustee, said the new site offers “growth potential.”

“If down the road things get busier for the village — let’s say we have to bring on more staff — we have the ability to do that,” Pappas said in an interview.

The property, which is centrally located in the village, also can prove valuable in the event of an emergency. For example, he envisioned space for residents to charge their phones during a power outage.

“We want to really make this a hub in our area,” Pappas said.