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Babylon gets \$1.2M to bring LI Music Hall of Fame to Wyandanch

December 27, 2016 By Denise M. Bonilla denise.bonilla@newsday.com



The Long Island Music Hall of Fame plans to set up its first permanent museum in Wyandanch as part of Babylon Town's revitalization efforts in the hamlet. Mixed-use buildings with retail and residential space, an ice-skating rink and a transit plaza are to be built near the LIRR station. (Credit: Torti Gallas)

The Town of Babylon is receiving more than a million dollars to help bring the Long Island Music Hall of Fame to Wyandanch.

The \$1.2 million is part of \$2.5 million in funding for countywide projects approved last week by the Suffolk County Legislature as part of the county's Jumpstart Suffolk, an initiative launched in 2013 by County Executive Steve Bellone to provide capital funds for shovel-ready, mixed-use, transit-oriented development projects.

Wyandanch Rising, Babylon's massive public-private redevelopment of the hamlet, already has received funding through Jumpstart Suffolk. Bellone spearheaded the revitalization project nearly 15 years ago when he was Babylon Town supervisor.

The money for the Hall of Fame will be used to design interior features of the new building at 20 Station Dr. Founded in 2004, the Hall has an office in Melville but has not been able to find a permanent home for its collection of music memorabilia.

The Hall will use about 10,000 square feet of the ground floor of a planned 100,000-square-foot commercial building that will be three to five stories tall. The building will anchor the east side of a plaza between two apartment buildings with retail space, town officials said.

The Hall's new home will include a museum and a performance space. The developer of the apartments, Albanese Organization Inc. of Garden City, also will construct the new building that will house the Hall.



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“It’s the unique thing that’s a draw for people to come to Wyandanch,” said Jonathan Keyes, the town’s head of downtown revitalization. “And it fits into one of the original goals of Wyandanch Rising, which is to brand it as a cultural arts community because it does have a history of arts.”

There was one dissenting vote for the county funding, from Legis. Robert Trotta (R-Fort Salonga). Trotta said in a later interview that the Hall of Fame’s ability to draw in visitors is untested and that Bellone is wrong to think people will travel to Wyandanch to see it.

“If they want to test out the Hall of Fame, they should put it in one of the empty stores near The Paramount in Huntington to see how it works out at no cost,” he said. “To spend \$1.2 million on this is absurd.”

The Hall of Fame will not pay rent, town officials said, and the push remains for an anchor tenant to lease the building and create daytime foot traffic to the area.

Town Supervisor Rich Schaffer and Albanese have stated a desire to move the HRHCare Martin Luther King Jr. Health Center to the building, but are awaiting approval from the county, which pays the lease for the center at its current location, a quarter of a mile south on Straight Path.

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