

East Hampton Urged to Save Historic James Brooks House

 By Kenny Forman

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The Brooks House

Members of the public urged the East Hampton Town Board to advance long-stalled efforts to restore the **Springs home of James Brooks and Charlotte Park**, two pioneers in the **Abstract Expressionist** movement.

The town purchased the couple's home for \$1.1 million a decade ago but plans to turn the Brooks-Park Historical Site into a museum have yet to materialize beyond it being locally designated as a landmark — and observers revived the issue at the board's meeting on September 7.

"The structures on this property have yet to be restored," said Scott Wilson, the town's director of land acquisition and management, who detailed plans for the improvements to the site.

The home and art studio on the site have fallen into disrepair and require remediation before it can be opened to the public.

George Negrofonte cited the fact that if things don't improve, more people would start to forget Brooks and Park, and everything they've done for art.

"I think it's truly impossible to understand how well known they were in the '70s," he said. "This project is really way, way bigger than this community because the art of these two wonderful people needs to be elevated back to its proper place."

One by one, members of the community continued to speak out in support of the project.

"I do hope the town will purposely look for and seek out similar types of acquisitions that combine beauty, nature, open spaces and some structures," said one woman who called into the meeting. "We can come together, learn more in-depth about certain issues like history, culture, the arts environment, and ecological and water issues."

The board plans to meet again to address the plan at a later date.