

Montauk Playhouse Improvements Are on Track



In the west lobby of the Montauk Playhouse, a new staircase and stadium-style seating are being built.
Denis Hartnett Photos

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As rain streamed down Monday morning, an excavator removed the first dirt for the new lap pool in the Montauk Playhouse Community Center. During a walkthrough tour, the enormous progress that has been made in just the last few months was showcased. In addition to the start of the digging, the second floor, where events will be held, is on its way to completion, with small offices and sitting areas in the works around almost every corner of the new building.

"The goal was to try to make this building as versatile as possible for as many groups, simultaneously, as possible," said Scott DiBerardino of Island Structures Engineering, the project manager. Construction is on schedule to be completed by summer 2025, he confirmed. "The goal is always to beat that," he added, "but right now we're still on track for summer."

"About three months ago this was a dirt pile," East Hampton Town Councilman David Lys remarked of the new lobby entrance, which has stadium-style seating and stairs leading up to windows overlooking the pool deck. The windows, made of insulated glass, were added with parents in mind, allowing them to watch swimming lessons without being on top of the action, and, less important but still essential, keeping street shoes off the deck.



An excavator is at work on a lap pool on the lower level.

It is expected that the dig on the lap pool will take about three days, after which comes the initial pour of its concrete floor and walls, followed by plumbing equipment and backfilling.

Gesturing to a layout of the pool area, Mr. DiBerardino explained the excavation plan. There are to be two pools, not just one. "When they're 80 percent done with the structure on this one (the athletic pool), this one (a "wellness" pool, for water aerobics, children's swim lessons, and more) will get excavated," he said. "We're working, really, from south to north."

There are two large holes on both levels of the building's north side. Supplies are coming in through those spaces, and the excavated dirt is going out. The holes will be closed up toward the end of construction, once panels partitioning off the second-floor event spaces are installed. The 800-pound panels, which can be moved to form one huge space or three smaller ones, are four feet wide and 16 feet tall.



A new second-story space has been added above what will be the aquatic center.

The second floor, added recently right above the pool space, looks as if it's been there forever. Mr. DiBerardino was quick to credit Crossroads Construction, the general contractor; electricians from MRJ Industries, mechanical work by Boilermatic Welding Solutions, and the workers of Maccarone Plumbing. All of them have been on site "Saturday and Sunday the past two weeks, to keep on schedule," he said. "We've been blessed with four really good contractors — everyone is excellent."

With the first dirt moved and the excavation of the pool area beginning, the next big milestone will be "building watertight."

That means that "when it rains outside, nothing comes in the building," said the engineer — the final fitting of watertight windows, doors, and siding. That will not happen until the big holes on both floors are closed, probably not before the end of the year.

Throughout Monday's tour, Sarah Iudicone, president of the Montauk Playhouse Community Center Foundation, stressed that fund-raising — both in the hamlet and in the larger township — is still very much continuing.

"It's important for the community to know that this is their space," she said. "The construction part is fully funded, but we are still fund-raising, and it's vitally important to have the furnishings and all the things to fill the playhouse" purchased, installed, and ready for use on the day the work is completed.