

Residents ask mentally ill be removed

By DAVID KUSNET

A 200-bed old-age home in Brighton Heights — whose owner admitted in January that he had attracted only 35 elderly residents — was charged last night with "dumping" discharged mental patients onto community streets where they molest neighborhood residents.

A report filed with Community Board 2 contends that residents of Klein's Forest Manor Home for Adults, at Forest and Brighton Aves., now houses emotionally disturbed residents who are "intimidating the entire community."

In a letter to Ernst Bendix, chairman of the board's West Brighton committee, Mrs. Frances R. Lowney, representing the Brighton Heights Community Council, demanded: "We want these mentally ill persons removed from the premises and removed from our community before one of them does bodily harm to us or our children, or the elderly persons in attendance in the home."

Bendix told Board 2 that Klein's Forest Manor Home for Adults has reached an agreement with the state Department of Mental Hygiene, under which the facility receives discharged patients from state mental hospitals and schools for the mentally retarded.

This agreement reportedly followed the failure of the facility to attract enough elderly residents to operate profitably as a proprietary facility. Developer Milton Klein acknowledged in January that only 35 elderly residents were moving in and that he was offering the state to provide care programs for former mental patients.

Klein said then, "I didn't begin by going into the mental health business; but in the last year and a half, that's really what the business has become."

Attending the board meeting in Borough Hall, Joseph Margolis, executive assistant in the Office of Staten Island Development, and Mrs. Beverly Schwarz, borough planning staffer, apparently confirmed the home's new use.

Bendix filed a statement from Mrs. Lowney alleging that "mentally ill residents have been seen expectorating on the public walkways, banging on parked cars in the area at 2 a.m., and generally creating disturbances, threatening our children and ourselves."

After last night's meeting, an observer found few passersby — and no disorderly persons — within several blocks of the facility from 11:30 until midnight.

In the facility's lobby, several employees — but no residents — were talking and working. A guard maintained that after 8 p.m., the door is usually locked and residents must sign out and explain where they are going.

The door, however, was open shortly after midnight, although the guard and several other employees were on duty and noticed a visitor's arrival.

The employees denied that there had been disorderly incidents.

Bendix filed a statement by Joseph Carannante, president of the Brighton Heights Community Council, reporting these alleged incidents:

● May 13: Two men loitered in front of a neighborhood candy store, at Brighton and Castleton Aves., stopping cars and asking people for money.

● May 14-16: Patients entered a neighborhood store asking for coffee and cigarettes. "They asked everyone coming in and out for money," Carannante said. "Outside on the street, they picked up cigarettes, half-empty bottles of soda, c a n d y, anything available."

● May 19: Between 8:30 and 11:15 a.m., patients again asked passersby on Castleton Ave. for money.

● May 21, 23, 27 and 29: "Patients stopped people in front of Mike's Delicatessen soliciting money and stopping cars asking for money," Carannante said.

● May 29: "Two patients started to disrobe before a woman getting out of a car at the corner of Silver Lake Rd. and Brighton Ave.," Carannante charged.

● June 4, 6, 7 and 8: "Patients solicited money from pedestrians and cars stopped at light in front of Mike's Delicatessen," he continued.

Bendix also released a letter — which he called "completely unsatisfactory" — from Vivian F. Buckman, associate consultant for adult institutions for the state Department of Mental Hygiene.

She told him that "any person over the age of 16 who does not need medical or nursing care," including "persons who have been in state hospitals but are now considered as being ready for discharge," may enter facilities such as Klein's Forest Manor.

The state aide advised Bendix to bring "objectionable behavior" to the patient's attention and then to the facility's.

In another action, Board 2 heard a talk by the Rev. Msgr. William O'Brien, president of Daytop Village, on the possibility that the group-encounter drug rehabilitation program will move into a West Brighton building as an ambulatory treatment unit.

Msgr. O'Brien said the future of the plan depends largely on the decision of the community board. He also told David Smith, chairman of the Staten Island Comprehensive Health Planning Board, that Daytop officials will discuss the proposal with the planning unit.

The proposed facility, slated for 280 Broadway, will be the topic of a hearing Monday at 8 p.m. in Shiloh A.M.E. Zion Church, West Brighton.

Robert Incognito, Daytop

associate director, said the facility will serve Islanders referred from courts, community agencies, schools and social work programs.

Turning to community problems in New Brighton, the board learned that a Jersey St. storefront police station — promised by the St. George

Precinct to open last month — has yet to be approved.

Sonny Collins blamed an unwillingness by some policemen to work in the community for the delay in opening the center. Reached after the meeting, Brian Morris, aide to Borough President Connor, cited bureaucratic difficulties in the Police Department.

Collins announced a June 29 cleanup of Jersey St., with the thoroughfare closed to traffic from Brighton to Crescent Aves. He said neighborhood residents will plant trees, flowers and vegetables and fruits in vacant lots.

NEW PLAYGROUND

The board's Stapleton chairman, William Charaf, urged a city-funded "community coordinator" office in the community to monitor the delivery of city services and assist youth programs.

An "adventure playground" will open July 8 at 71 Beach St., he reported.

Board member John Steen filed a report urging that the city acquire Eib's Pond and the surrounding land in the Fox Hills section of Clifton as park land.

Steen said the proposed park would serve Clifton, Concord and parts of Stapleton and Rosebank. He declared, "Located midway between Staten Island's line of hills and the Narrows of New York Harbor, the ridge running along the east side of the pond offers a unique perspective on both."