

"It's an enormous threat to our children," says Mrs. Holzka who has two 13-year-old daughters.

What will the coalition do?

Legal action is a "real possibility," Rottersman says. "We're interested in the process of procurement. We wonder if it is not a fit subject for investigation."

What does Willowbrook intend to do?

"We still want to go into it," Robidoux says, adding that he is hoping to develop a community advisory committee for the Tysen St. halfway house.

And if the community can successfully kill the halfway house—a remote possibility, at this point—what would happen?

"If this doesn't work we'll try another," says Robidoux. "It would be a black eye for the professionals. But it would really be a defeat for the residents who are caught in the middle. The retarded need this house."

And for the future. Will it be different the next time around?

Robidoux says his people "will knock on doors." Knauss says that it is not state policy to go door to door. That will have to be resolved.

Could the community board miss the next halfway house? Yes, unless a liaison with the Regional Retardation Council is established and unless communication between the Borough President's office and the boards is improved.

As for the community, the fears are certainly still evident and complex and justified. There are still unanswered questions.

Only education and improved public relations by the Department of Mental Hygiene can allay the legitimate fears of community residents. And only two-way communication—among community members, community boards and state agencies—can prevent a future fiasco.

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