

Board 2's '79 budget priorities: Sewers, education, road funds

By DIANE C. LORE

Badly needed sewer construction for the mid-Island area ranked among the top concerns noted during Community Board 2's monthly meeting last night in the JK Building of Sea View Hospital and Home.

The board voted on a list of priorities for the city capital and expense budgets for fiscal year 1979, with sewer construction the first on the list. Board chairman Raymond Watson announced the formation of a special committee which will consider, among other things, setting up a five-point plan for future sewer construction.

Additionally the board approved a six-step process for the site selection of group homes and other social service facilities within the board's jurisdiction; heard a report on the status of a proposed 192-unit housing development in Ocean Breeze; voted to deny the approval of a zoning variance for a proposed health spa on Richmond Ave. in Bulls Head, and announced a special meeting of the board to debate the proposed Travis power plant.

As mandated under the City Charter revisions, the community board reviews the needs of each city agency for the coming fiscal year. A board committee ranks each agency on a priority basis, taking into consideration the importance of the city agency in the board's district and the adequacy of the service the city department or agency currently delivers to the district.

The board committee then presents the list of priorities to the full board for a vote. When the list of priorities is agreed upon by the board, the recommendations are sent to the Office of Management and Budget.

For the city capital budget, designed to cover the cost of construction, purchase of new property and permanent improvements to the area, Board 2 placed sewers, education and highways as the first three priorities. Other priorities included highway construction, equipment for fire and police protection and site selection for a new mid-Island library branch.

Among the key areas recommended for construction of storm and sanitary sewers are Naughton Ave. in Ocean Breeze, Greeley Ave. in Midland Beach, Felton St. in Graniteville, Forest Hill Rd. from Dorothy to Jasper Sts. in Willowbrook and Jerome Rd. in Dongan Hills.

Many of these areas have been subject to frequent flooding conditions.

As its second priority for the capital budget, the board approved the site selection and design for a new mid-Island high school. Charles Fertig, chairman of the expense and capital budget committee of the board, defended the need for the new school, noting, "the building of the new New Dorp High School will still not accommodate all the high school students in the area that can be served."

The board placed as its third priority the grading and paving by the Highway Department of Richmond Hill Rd. from Richmond Parkway to Clarke Ave. and Willowbrook Rd., from Hall Ave. to Bradley Ave., Willowbrook.

Under equipment for fire and police protection, the Fire Department requested installation of new alarm boxes in three locations in Heartland Village, and replacement of vehicles in the Jewett Ave. firehouse in Westerleigh and the Nelson Ave. firehouse in Great Kills. The board placed the fire equipment as its fourth priority.

There was brief confusion over Police Department equipment. The 122nd precinct, New Dorp, responded verbally, rather than submitting a formal letter to the board as requested. The board, however, approved a recommendation requesting five patrol cars and several two-way radios.

For the city expense budget, supported primarily by city taxes, fees and state and federal aid, the board recommended staff increases in the Fire Department, the Sanitation Department, public library branches and the Park Department.

The addition of 18 men was asked for the Island office of the Sanitation Department. The board recommended the staff of public library branches be increased by 20 percent to the level it was prior to the city budget cuts last year.

The list of budget priorities approved by the community board will be presented at tonight's Borough Board meeting in Borough Hall, St. George.

In announcing the formation of a special committee on sewers, Watson noted members would be kept busy during the year. The first item the new committee will consider when it meets next month is a five-point plan it may recommend for the Department of Water Resources to use when considering future sewer construction. The plan asks the Department of Water Resources to consider the cost of future sewer projects and the number of people the project will service when completed.

The site selection of group homes and other social services has been studied carefully by all three community boards. In the near future, the boards may face a number of proposals for group homes for the retarded, since a court decree mandated the population of the Willowbrook Developmental Center be reduced from its present population of 1,800 to 250 residents.

Linda Carelli, chairman of Board 2's mental health committee, however, noted the guidelines for group homes also applied to "what any group would have to go through if they wanted to put any kind of a social service facility within our board."

A social service agency seeking to place a facility within the board's jurisdiction must first outline the proposal in a letter to the board and present a detailed plan. If the board committee approves the program, the committee will work with the social service agency to select a site.

Jack Deitch, chairman of the land use committee, reported on public hearings held by the state Department of Environmental Conservation on a proposed 192-unit housing development off Capodanno Blvd. in Ocean Breeze. Deitch called for the board to continue its interest in preserving the wetlands in the area which could be threatened by the proposed housing development.

"A substantial portion of the wetlands would be paved over," he noted, if the housing development were constructed. This would also create drainage problems in the area and possibly lead to additional flooding.

The board also voted to deny approval of a zoning variance for the construction of a proposed Jack Lalane Health Spa at 1600 Richmond Ave. in Bulls Head. A McDonald's restaurant and a diner had also been considered for the property, located near the Coral Lane shopping center.

However, Nancy Rosan of the Island office of the Department of City Planning, noted the proposed health spa would not create additional traffic in the area, since most of the clients would use the facility during the evening and off-peak traffic hours.

A status report on the Danube Nursing Home was held over until the next board meeting Jan. 30. A Jewish congregation from Brooklyn has proposed plans to purchase the Concord facility.

Also Jan. 30, the board will hold a special meeting to debate the proposed Travis power plant.