

Fire marshals seeking arsonist who set blaze in Dongan Hills office

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Perrotta of Midland Beach, said yesterday he doesn't know what to do. Sifting through the rubble of the fire-charred structure, Perrotta commented:

"I'm in shock...Perhaps it's a vendetta. If it is, I don't know if I want to pursue this anymore. Who knows what could happen if I do?"

A portion of Perrotta's brick building, located on a quiet, residential block, is used now by New York Foundling Hospital caseworkers. "I've leased out to a child-caring agency for 10 years," Perrotta declared, "and there was never any objection from the community. I don't really understand why there is a problem now."

Architect Andrew Tsaris, surveying the structure along with two contractors yesterday, called the damage "not as bad as it looks."

Twenty-two windows were smashed, the roof caved in one spot, two rooms were badly burned, but little apparent structural damage resulted from the blaze, Tsaris said.

The building was unoccupied when firefighters from three engine and three ladder companies reported in response to an alarm sounded about 11:55 p.m.

Meanwhile, the leader of the Dongan Hills United Civic Association, which sparked opposition to the site as a center for the retarded, decried the suspected arson as a "disgrace."

"I believe it's terrible if the fire has been declared suspicious," president Bernard Kosinski said. "We oppose what the state is doing and believe it should not be. But when it comes to the nitty gritty, whatever follows has to be by the rules."

Kosinski maintained his group con-

done no violence or "acts of vengeance" and said he would call an emergency meeting of the group's board of directors to put that on the record.

Miss Howe, before learning a flammable substance had been discovered at the fire scene, said: "I would hate to think this had anything to do with our plans to occupy. That would be very unfortunate."

More than 600 people attended the April 19 meeting at which Community Board 2 approved the center by a margin of 26 to 8. Some Dongan Hills residents objected strenuously, saying property devaluation would result.

The proposed center is to house offices of administrators now located at the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook. It is to serve up to 200 residents who have either been repatriated into their home communities from the Willowbrook institution or are living in the Board 2 area now, Miss Howe said.

Most of the services are to be provided by caseworkers who will visit clients within their homes, according to Miss Howe. The center is to be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., as well as two evenings a week.

At the April 19 meeting, some Dongan Hills residents asked if other locations were considered. A representative of the borough services office said other buildings had been examined, but the state preferred the Dumont Ave. site because it did not require extensive renovations.

Chief Barracato asked anyone with information about the fire to call investigators at 965-8298. All calls will be kept confidential, he said.

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