

Fire-damaged center to open

A day center for retarded persons, which had its opening delayed by two suspicious fires, will finally open next month.

Elin M. Howe, director of the Office of Borough Developmental Services, said the center, located at 26 Dumont Ave., Dongan Hills, has been renovated for use by the retarded and all fire-related damages repaired.

"We're looking forward to an opening by mid-November or at the latest by the end of the month," Ms. Howe told a meeting yesterday of the Staten Island Regional Retardation and Disabilities Council at the Institute for Basis Research in Willowbrook.

Ms. Howe, who also serves as director

of the Staten Island Developmental Center, said the state plans to provide counseling, therapy and recreation programs for the 200 retarded persons living in the Community Board 2 area . . .

The most recent fire at the center broke out Sept. 24, causing light damage.

A fire May 1, which caused medium damage to the two-story brick building, occurred only two weeks after Community Board 2 had approved the house for use as a day center over community opposition.

No suspects have been arrested in either blaze.

Under the terms of a five-year lease between the state and the building

owner, Joseph Perrotta, the state agreed to pay the owner \$37,000 for renovations at the house as well as \$34,800 a year in rent for the 5,800-square-foot building.

Also during the council meeting, members were told that the United Cerebral Palsy Association of New York City is moving ahead with plans to develop 99 acres of Sea View Hospital and Home into a rehabilitation complex for the physically handicapped.

Ronah Hanshaft, borough director for UCP, said that fund-raising efforts are continuing for the \$3.5-million campus, which is expected to take seven years to complete. If all goes well, Ms. Hanshaft said, construction could begin in April.