

New Dorp residents say safer site needed for retarded center

By DIANE C. LORE

New Dorp residents said last night they would welcome a proposed training center for the retarded in their neighborhood, but they added they are opposed to locating the center on busy New Dorp Lane.

A Very Special Place, a private, non-profit organization, is seeking to open a day and evening training center for mentally retarded and physically handicapped adults in the former RAP Center building on New Dorp Lane.

More than 150 people jammed the board room at Sea View Hospital and Home last night for a public hearing on the proposal conducted by a committee of Community Board 2. The board will decide whether to recommend the center be opened on New Dorp Lane at its next meeting, Dec. 19.

Most New Dorp residents who addressed board members last night cited traffic congestion and parking problems on New Dorp Lane, questioning if they would pose a threat to clients who would use the center, should it be opened in

the RAP center building.

James Dooley, representing the New Dorp Central Civic Association, said homeowners have no objection to the proposal. "We have accepted the idea of having it in our community. We have agreed to take this program in," he said.

But Dooley noted that the RAP center building is located near an intersection and two parking lots used by bank customers.

The proposal calls for two vans to transport clients to and from the center.

Should the vans pull up in front of the RAP center, Dooley said the vans would discharge clients "into the middle of this traffic." "This is not a safe place," he added.

Howard Safar, community board member and director of the Staten Island Mental Health Society, asked Dooley if the civic association considered commercial vans and trucks making deliveries to stores on New Dorp Lane a traffic hazard. "If someone wanted to pull up a van and, say, unload carpet for

(Continued on Page 5)

Page
12