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a store, would they get treated the same way, in terms of traffic?" Several residents protested, calling the comparison unfair.

Dooley's comments were echoed by Andrew Luzzi, executive vice president of civic association, who showed a short film made by the association and showing traffic around the RAP center building.

The 122nd Precinct Community Council in New Dorp also opposed the RAP center site. "This particular site is not appropriate. They do need a safer site," Angela Drosdorf, representing the council, said.

Several speakers suggested alternate sites in the neighborhood be looked at, including the recently vacated Pantry Pride supermarket on Hylan Blvd. and the vacant E.J. Frock Co. building on New Dorp Plaza.

Genevieve Benoit, president of A Very Special Place, said both sites were inappropriate. The E.J. Frock building, she said, is too small to house the program. "From what I could see, it's much too little space," she said.

The Pantry Pride building, she said, would require extensive renovation, although it contains the 10,000 square feet of floor space she said is needed to house the program comfortably. "This site would require the construction and renovation of the building, which would mean more of your tax dollars spent," she said.

Other New Dorp residents who spoke against using the RAP center building questioned if the building was accessible for people in wheelchairs; if it had adequate fire protection, including fire escapes, and if the building contained adequate space to store refuse.

Miss Benoit said the building already had been inspected by the state. "No one is more concerned about our clients than us, who will be providing the services," she said.

She claimed she had asked the civic association four months ago for time to speak at its meeting and outline the program, but was never acknowledged. "It's becoming a never ending process of meeting your stipulations," she said,

referring to the civic association.

Ben Pulice, chairman of the community board's traffic and transportation committee, said he had inspected the site and agreed there was traffic congestion. He noted however, "No matter who the RAP center building is rented out to, the same traffic problem will exist.

"Ralph Catania, the owner of this building," Pulice added, "has every right to rent this building to whomever he pleases."

"There are an awful lot of people here who are not listening to one another," injected Sister Virginia Lee, a teacher at St. Sylvester's School, Concord. "Everybody is trying to get their own selfish point made," she added.

The hearing was chaired by Michael Primiano, who heads the community board's New Dorp area subcommittee. Primiano is also president of the New Dorp Central Civic Association. He will vote on the RAP center site at the community board meeting.

At last month's board meeting, two members questioned the ethics of Primiano acting in the dual capacity.

"I'm wearing two hats, and it's difficult," he acknowledged last night. As Primiano spoke against the RAP center site, he turned the hearing over to Jack Deitch, another board member.

A Very Special Place hopes to serve 80 mentally retarded and physically handicapped adults at the center, according to its proposal. Half will come from the South Shore, and the remainder will come from the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook.

Thirty clients would be served during the day programs, while 50 would be served during evenings and weekends.

Services provided during the daytime hours would include occupational and speech therapy, mobility training and living skills. Evening and weekend sessions would include arts and crafts sessions and various family activities where families of clients could participate in programs on a membership basis.

The ratio of staff to clients would be approximately 4-1. The center would be funded entirely by the state Developmental Disabilities.