

Board 3 reverses previous approval of one group home site

By DOUGLAS PATRICK

Community Board 3, reversing itself, voted last night to oppose a Great Kills site as a group home for the retarded.

The board voted last November to approve 6 Ainsworth Ave. as one of 13 possible South Shore sites, but board members encountered stiff opposition from area residents, who claimed approval of the Great Kills site would be unfair to the community and unsafe for the retarded.

Board members, including Willard Shearon, chairman of the board's health and hospital committee, said the board had been unaware when it initially approved the site that the nearby Hylan Manor Nursing Home housed former mental patients.

Shearon said the board had not received any reports about the former mental patients at the Hylan Nursing Home until it became known that 6 Ainsworth Ave., which is approximately a half mile away, had been approved as a potential group home.

Allen Peters, first vice chairman, said: "We all knew that Hylan Manor existed nearby the Ainsworth Ave. site, but we did not know former mental patients resided there."

Board members agreed with residents living near the Ainsworth Ave. site that a group home for the retarded and the Hylan Manor Nursing Home would place an unfair burden on the area.

But Elin M. Howe, director of the Sta-

(Continued on Page 21)

(From Page 1)

ten Island Development Center, Willowbrook, said yesterday that 6 Ainsworth Ave. and 750 Page Ave., Tottenville, were still considered primary spots for group homes, only needing approval of the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

As part of its efforts to return all but 250 profoundly handicapped Willowbrook center residents to their hometowns by 1981, eight sites, which will house 80 persons, will be chosen by the state on the South Shore.

"Both 750 Page Ave. and 6 Ainsworth Ave. are being seriously considered and have been preliminarily inspected by architects, who report they appear to be satisfactory," Miss Howe said.

One of the sites, according to Miss Howe, will be developed into a group home by "late spring or early summer."

Asked before last night's vote about Community Board 3's possible reversal of its earlier approval, Miss Howe said the board had enough time to make its original choices, but she added: "If they come up with a disapproval tonight, it's something I will just have to discuss with my superiors."

John Weaver of 25 Ainsworth Ave. was one of more than 50 residents of Great Kills and Bay Terrace who attended the board meeting in the Messiah Lutheran Church hall in Annadale to await the board's reconsideration.

"I'm very pleased the board took the action it did, and I hope the state takes it under consideration," he said.

"We have nothing against the concept of a group home for the retarded, but it would be clustering to set up another facility in the area," Weaver added.

Although the board approved 13 sites last November, rather than eight sites it was required to recommend, 10 of the spots are vacant lots. State officials have said that although two or three group homes might be constructed, that would take several years to accomplish.

Only three sites approved by the board include existing structures. One of those is 51 Wilbur Ave., a boarding house that is being investigated by state agencies for building-code violations.