

~Officers picked~

Board gets presentation on group homes

By DIANE C. LORE

Joseph Manifold, a five-year veteran of community board service, was chosen last night as chairman of Community Board 2, during an uncontested election at the board's monthly meeting in the nurses residence of Sea View Hospital and Home.

Manifold has served as acting board chairman since last June, when then-chairman Raymond Watson resigned to accept an out-of-town job offer.

When no further nominations were received from the floor last night, Manifold, who was the sole choice of the nominating committee, was returned as chairman.

Manifold, who lives on Manor Ct., Lighthouse Hill, is employed by the state Department of Correctional Services, and works at the Arthur Kill Correctional Facility. He will serve as chairman through March of 1980.

Other board officers elected last night were Jack Deitch as first vice chairman; Thomas Kiffin, second vice chairman; Ruth Mingoia, third vice chairman; Charles Fertig, secretary, and Dorothy Zarrilli, treasurer.

In other business, the board heard a presentation by the Staten Island Office of Mental Retardation on a program of community group homes for the retarded; discussed a proposal by Consolidated Edison to burn high-sulfur fuel at its Arthur Kill power plant in Travis, and discussed a proposal to divide the Island into two community school districts.

"We're just as frightened of you as you are of us; we're terribly afraid you will mistreat our people," Beatrice Victor, director of a Mariners Harbor group home for the mentally retarded, told board members.

Under the Willowbrook Consent Decree and plans for the decentralization of the Staten Island Developmental Center, each community board must open several neighborhood-based group homes to serve mentally retarded residents within the board area. Community Board 2, which must have approximately eight such homes, can present the state with a list of possible sites to choose from.

"I'm here because I feel there is a misunderstanding about this among my neighbors," Mrs. Victor said. She and Dr. Gerald Spielman, director of the Staten Island Center for Developmental Disabilities, explained the concept of the group home program to board members and fielded questions.

In concept, the program basically aims to teach a retarded person to function on his own in the community, Mrs. Victor explained.

"Parents, have you noticed when your child goes off to college or off on his own, how they grow up, and learn to do more things for themselves?" she asked. "Well, it's no different with the retarded."

Parents of retarded children, she noted "won't be around forever to protect them," hence they must be taught how to live in the community.

The board has not taken any action on the issue of group homes yet. It is considering a list of possible sites and plans a public hearing before any vote is taken on the matter.

The board also voted 31 to four, with four abstentions, to oppose a plan by Con Edison to burn high-sulfur fuel in its plant in Travis. The plan, the board said, would present a health hazard to residents. Staten Island, it was noted, already has a high incidence rate of cancer.

The board's vote followed a Monday night meeting with Con Edison division director Dr. Peter C. Freudenthal. After that meeting, a board committee drafted a proposal recommending the board oppose the Con Ed plan.

Con Edison would like to start burning oil with a 2.2 percent sulfur content as part of its program to eventually switch to coal — which has a greater sulfur content — to cut down on its foreign oil imports.

After much discussion, board members postponed a vote on a resolution calling for the Island to be divided into two community school districts.

"Forty to 45 (public elementary, intermediate and junior high) schools is too large a number for one community school board to administer," said Charles Fertig, who called for the resolution on redistricting.

"The issue of redistricting comes up every two years in the community school board," noted Ruth Mingoia, who is active in Island parent-teacher groups. "There are pros and cons to the redistricting idea. One argument for redistricting is that it will get the supervisors into the schools. The big question will be how the districts will be divided."

"If the districts are divided into North and South Shore districts, the North Shore would probably get more funds," she said, because they have more schools.

"They'll never agree on district lines," predicted Michael Codd. "What you'll have is one community pitted against the other."

The community school board may hold its own hearings on redistricting. Meanwhile, Community Board 2 members may come back to the issue after further studies and information can be presented.