

Richmond Rd. and Hylan Blvd.

William Counihan, vice president of the Dongan Hills United Civic Association, which objected to the site, suggested the five group homes be clustered in one area. "Call it 'Common Sense Village' and put the homes in one area, with their own yard, and their own garden."

Pat Gentile, president of the Staten Island Concerned Citizens Committee, said the Cromwell Ave. site was not appropriate because it is "near too many children."

"Why can't apartments be used for the retarded?" he suggested. "The state can take over a whole floor." He cited the success of the Arlington Terrace group home in Mariners Harbor. "That's functioning well because it's in an apartment house."

"Some of the mothers don't want their retarded children living at home with them, but why do we have to pay for that?" asked one Dongan Hills homeowner. "Put the group homes on the Willowbrook property where you have a whole 364 acres to build on," she suggested.

The Catholic Guardian Society of New York has offered to run a group home proposed for a two-family wood-frame house at 1582 Richmond Ave., Graniteville. Graniteville residents opposed to the site said the house also is not served by sanitary sewers, and the wood-frame structure would pose a fire hazard.

Charles Notafrafrancisco, a Richmond

Ave. resident, objected to the site because of traffic along Richmond Ave., and the lack of sewers.

"The community is obviously very opposed to the site, and that in itself raises questions about the safety of the potential clients," one Graniteville resident told community board members.

"Can you guarantee that my children will not be harmed by these people?" a Graniteville resident asked board members. "They may be very harmless people, but what if the neighborhood kids harass them and get them riled up?"

A fifth site in the Community Board 2 area proposed for a group home, is a two-family house at 42 Gadsen Pl., in the Heartland Village development in New Springville. The Manhattan-based Association for Children with Retarded Mental Development has offered to run the home.

John Guttman, president of the Heartland Village Civic Association, which objected to the site, asked the board about safety precautions and staffing. "These are all severely and profoundly retarded people. God forbid something happens to them. They could wander around and fall into someone's swimming pool and drown, God forbid."

Guttman suggested the state "buy a piece of land and build its own homes to its own specifications."

Max Levy, a Heartland Village resident, said the Gadsen Pl. site was in an area "where there are a lot of teenagers." "People will attack them, resent them and abuse them," he said. "There's plenty of land right here at Sea

View," he added, suggesting the state locate the homes there.

"We don't want to be rabble-rousers, and we don't want to use scare tactics, but you'd better come up with a better solution and some answers to our questions," Betty Cardella, a New Springville resident, told the board.

All of the sites discussed last night would house at least six severely and profoundly retarded adults, according to a state proposal. State plans call for each home to be supervised on a 24-hour basis, with residents attending sheltered workshops or special education classes for at least six hours a day. A neighborhood advisory committee will be set up to monitor each home.

The group homes are a result of a 1975 court order, the Willowbrook Consent Decree, which calls for residents of the Staten Island Developmental Center to be shifted into community-based facilities. Each group home must house former residents of the developmental center as well as mentally retarded residents already living in the community.

Selection of group home sites must be made in accordance with guidelines established by the state legislature. The guidelines state that community boards must participate in the site-selection process.

According to Joseph Manifold, Chairman of Community Board 2, board members can either approve the list of five sites or propose alternate sites within the board area. Alternate sites suggested by the community board must be approved by the Staten Island Developmental Center and the state.