

1215191050 (11 010W 122)
1215191050 (11 010W 122)

New York Daily News 6-3-79

3 group home sites backed

By MARY ENGELS

Three of four sites proposed for group homes for the mentally retarded on Staten Island were approved by last week Community Planning Board 2's Health and Hospital Committee and will be placed before the full board June 19 for final decision.

The committee's session was a stormy one, with some members puzzled over how the site selectors at the Staten Island Development Center and the New York State Office of Mental Retardation chose the locations.

Representatives of the Center and the Mental Retardation Office, pointed out that at the last committee meeting in January, they had been given a choice of five sites and three alternate locations, plus the option of making other choices.

Threats eliminate two sites

Two sites in Grasmere, one on W. Fingerboard Road and an alternate on Kermit Ave., were eliminated earlier in the week because of "threats of violence and harassment to the owners," said Scot Booth, who is the site selector for the Developmental Center.

"The community should understand we have a job to do. We're weighing whether the home chosen is a good one in terms of being structurally sound to live

in, not in a flooded area, and so forth," one board member said.

Last week, members of the Grasmere Homeowners' Association, were unable to offer any input at the meeting but afterwards they expressed their opposition.

Ed Hassett, the director of resource development for the New York State Department of Mental Retardation stressed, "Time is of the essence" in selecting sites.

"We are committed to have five in Board 2's area; and the sooner it can be done, the better for all concerned."

Under the Willowbrook consent decree, by April 30, 1981, the resident population at the center must be cut to 250, all Staten Islanders.

The group homes scattered throughout the three Community Board districts on the Island will house about 150 clients, ranging from 6 to 10 in a house.

The sites recommended by the board include 630 Hylan Blvd., 42 Gadsen Place, and 1582 Richmond Ave.

Each would be under the auspices of community services such as Federated Employments Guidance Service, the Association of Children with Retarded Mental Development, and the Catholic Guardians Society.

The board rejected a site at Cromwell Avenue because it was in need of too many costly repairs.