

Proximity to adult home sours board on group home site

By DOUGLAS PATRICK

Before a crowd of almost 100 community residents, Community Board 3 decided last night to oppose a group home site for the mentally retarded at 62 Justin Ave. in Bay Terrace.

Meeting in the Messiah Lutheran Church hall, Annadale, the vote followed almost an hour of discussion between board members and representatives of the Bay Terrace Civic Association and

the state Office for Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

The board recently reversed itself and decided to oppose a group home site at 6 Ainsworth Ave., also in Bay Terrace, when it learned that the proposed home would be less than a half-mile away from the Hylan Manor Adult Home.

John Weaver, president of the civic association, said the board should also oppose the Justin Ave. site because it was approximately a half-mile away from the adult home and it would once again be "saturating the neighborhood" with state-funded facilities.

"You should oppose the Justin Ave. site for the same reason you were against the Ainsworth Ave. site," said Weaver.

Weaver said there was no clear definition as to what constituted the saturation, or "clustering" of state-funded fa-

cilities in an area and insisted the Justin Ave. site was objectionable because Bay Terrace was too small a community to absorb another facility like the Hylan Manor.

State representatives said that 62 Justin Ave. has at least a two-family home and the establishment of a group home for eight mentally retarded people -- in addition to at least two staff people -- would not mean any further use of already inadequate city services.

Scott Booth, who is in charge of locating group homes on Staten Island for the

mentally retarded, said he would discuss the decision with other officials of the state Office for Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and decide what action should be taken.

State officials could appeal the board's decision and ask the commissioner, Thomas Coughlin, to set up a hearing to appeal the board's decision. Or, Booth said, the state may decide to seek another site, perhaps in Bay Terrace, and work with Community Board 3 in seeking community approval for the new site.

Community Board 3 has already approved four other sites for group homes with its South Shore district boundaries.

A total of 80 people will be placed in group homes or apartments in the board area.

Richard McGivney stressed that the board will continue to request it be informed where people are being placed in the community and assist the state in finding suitable sites for the mentally retarded.

In other action, the board voted to oppose a zoning variance at 496 Arthur Kill Rd., Richmond, which would permit the owner to build a gas service station and retail grocery store in non-commercial district.

The board also voted to oppose the restoration of operations at the liquefied

natural gas tanks in Rossville and will forward its recommendation to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

In two motions on environmental issues, the board voted to oppose the revision of the Septic Tank Code, which eased regulations for the construction of septic tanks.

It decided to recommend a borough-wide meeting be conducted to discuss the federal 208 Plan to improve the quality of waterways and the Atlantic Ocean by 1983.

Finally, the designation of Sandy Ground in Charleston as an area of historical significance was approved by the board.