

## Voice in the community

# Board 1 knows its problems —it meets in middle of them

By A. STANLEY ALLISON

The addresses 111 Water St. and 111 Canal St., Stapleton, face each other in a kind of deliberate antagonism. One houses a methadone maintenance clinic and the other the headquarters of Community Board 1.

The years spent selecting potential sites to which to relocate the clinic, inevitably followed by unwilling and unyielding communities and institutions, in a way have come to represent an ultimate challenge to the board, its powers of persuasion and its effectiveness in general.

So it was no accident that the board announced with pride that its new quarters would be in the red, fortress-like building at 111 Canal St., just steps away from the infamous storefront clinic.

The confidence displayed by the board in settling into the middle of one of the most troubled North Shore communities is one of the things that make it the most respected board on Staten Island.

To a great degree, the confidence and respect that Board 1 enjoys was not cultivated the same way an individual might seek and gain the same qualities.

The board had no part in choosing the intricacies of plotting a mixture of stabilization and growth where deteriora-

tion is a dominant factor.

It was either stem the tide or go under; not really a choice at all.

Instinctively, member Allen Cappelli said, the board "has the vision of what the North Shore can be. The North Shore is changing, and how these changes take place depends on the vision of the people on the board."

The common objective of "revitalizing the North Shore," however, has not spared the board a complex variety of issues to resolve.

Often the issues are presented with a clear-cut community sentiment, which might demonstrate to the board just how simple the issue is to resolve.

In some of those cases, the community's viewpoint is "a crucial part of the

decision-making process," Thomas LaManna, board chairman, said.

"But we also recognize that in certain cases the minority viewpoint of an issue has to be considered and in some cases, based on all the factors involved, we may come to a conclusion that is not with the majority position," LaManna added.

He cited the delivery of essential services to the mentally retarded, elderly, poor, youngsters without families and homes and the drug-addicted.

"While these services tend to be unpopular when they're placed in communities that are balanced, even though there may be opposition, our responsibility," LaManna said, "is to consider the overall effect of either providing or not providing the service."

It was inevitable that community boards in general would grow — in power and experience — as they became more involved in the issues that surrounded them, but Board 1 has matured in ways different from its counterparts.

A sense of balance in the board's decisions evolved to compensate for an imbalanced North Shore; a collective instinct to get the most out of a situation developed among board members, and a

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