

## Voice in the community

# Board 2: Caught in the middle and pressured by varied groups

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strong opinions they want to get across, and they won't give up," he added.

An example, he said, was the public hearing in May on proposed group home sites for the mentally retarded. Almost 600 people in the Board 2 area attended the four-hour hearing to voice opposition to the group home sites.

"There's no doubt, judging from the remarks some people made that night, that they hadn't done their homework on the issue. Nevertheless, they cared enough to speak out. Most of their remarks, while somewhat misguided, were still sincere and hard to ignore," the city official said.

After a lengthy debate and having weighed community opposition to the group home sites, the board voted last month to reject each site on the ground that the board area is already "oversaturated" with community-based health care facilities.

In other recent issues, the board voted down a proposal to place a methadone clinic in the South Beach Psychiatric Center, Ocean Breeze, and approved plans to open a training center on New Dorp Lane to serve mentally retarded and handicapped adults. Both issues brought a heavy response from civic groups and area residents.

Issues such as the methadone clinic and care of the mentally retarded raise questions about the board's effectiveness and responsibilities.



**This sewer outfall under construction at the foot of Seaview Ave., Ocean Breeze, will connect with a massive network of new sewers in the Grasmere-Dongan Hills area. Flooding, a constant problem in the Board 2 area, should be eased.**

S.I. Advance Photo by Irving Silverstein