

Judge OKs suits from associations to halt group homes

A judge has ruled that two Staten Island civic associations seeking to prevent group homes for the mentally retarded from opening in their neighborhoods have the legal right to bring the court proceedings.

Supreme Court Justice Charles R. Rubin also granted the requests of the Grasmere Homeowners Association and the Dongan Hills United Civic Association to try their separate actions as one case.

The organizations are seeking to set aside the September ruling of James E. Introne, commissioner of the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. Introne found sites at 630 Hylan Blvd., Grasmere, and 158 Cromwell Ave., Dongan Hills, suitable for group homes after Community Board 2 had rejected the sites.

The groups claim that Introne's decision was "arbitrary and capricious" and not supported by evidence. They say the Community Board 2 area already is "oversaturated" with community-based care facilities.

Rubin's ruling was handed down in connection with a series of motions in the case, including one by the state to dismiss the petitions.