

Metro

Staten Island

Daily News, Thursday, February 25, 1982

Retardate home rejected, 35-0

By BILL FARRELL

The proposed site of a group home for mentally retarded was voted down by Community Board 3 at its monthly meeting attended by more than 50 area residents. The vote was 35-0 against establishing a group home at 72 Ionia Ave. In Annadale, with two abstentions.

The meeting was held in the cafeteria of Richmond Memorial Hospital.

Stating that the vote "should not be considered a precedent for Staten Island," the board's Health and Hospital's Committee chairman, Joseph DiCapua, said: "This recommendation was not easy to make because we weren't following state requirements. However, we must take all things into

consideration both for the clients and the community."

DICAPUA SAID that while his committee was aware of the consequences of its decision, "we are adamant that the house is not adequate for a group home."

In his report, DiCapua criticized the state's feasibility study on the site. In the state report, the house was said to be on a street with sewers, which it is not. Reasons cited by the board for voting down the proposal included: An unsatisfactory septic system; limited access and egress to the area; limited amount of property preventing the installation of a larger septic tank and an "unstable nature of the roadway because of the leeching of the septic system."

But, DiCapua asserted, "sewers or septic tanks are not the issue here. This

is just not the proper place for this type of facility."

IMMEDIATELY AFTER the vote, local residents, who sat at the back of the room, put on their coats and, led by their attorney, Randy Lee, silently left the room.

Community Board 3 now has 15 days to find an alternate site, ask for an extension, or face a hearing by the State Office for Mental Retardation. After that hearing, the state has the power to either accept the recommendation, require that another site be found or open the originally proposed facility anyway.

According to Carol Rothfeld, coordinator for site development for the state, the problem with 72 Ionia Ave., "was with the feasibility study, and that problem has been addressed."

As to whether the state will want to pursue a group home at Ionia Ave, Rothfeld said "it would depend on when, or if, an alternate site is selected and if that site fits both the criteria for the community and the state."

ROTHFELD DID say that in light of the faulty drainage system at Ionia Ave., "it is a possibility that it would be more expensive than first thought to open the home on that street."

In other business at the meeting, District Manager Frank Beraud told the membership that the final repairs on the Page Ave. bridge should be completed by the weekend.

The board also voted a measure requesting that all candidates for governor file a position paper on the proposed PASNY Power Plant in Travis. ■