

J. D. Adnan - 5/17/83

Beth Rifka use clears one hurdle

A plan to transfer people now in the Staten Island Developmental Center and other state institutions into the former Beth Rifka Nursing Home building in Concord has cleared its first hurdle.

The state Facilities Development Corp. has told a state mental health agency that the Targee Street building, after some renovations, would be a feasible alternative for relocating the residents, a spokesman for the agency said yesterday.

The spokesman, William Knowlton, said the state Office of

Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) is waiting to be apprised of the building's fair market value before officials there decide whether to go ahead with the plan for relocation.

The MRDD is exploring the possibility of buying or leasing the 240-bed building, Knowlton said.

A federal court has ordered the state to move its institutionalized residents into smaller homes.

The Beth Rifka building, which is still tied up in federal Bank-

ruptcy Court, has been vacant since February, when the nursing home closed its doors under pressure from the state Health Department. That shutdown is now being investigated by a state administrative judge.

Knowlton said the Facilities Development Corp. report said between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in building improvements would have to be made before people in state institutions could be moved in.

If MRDD decides to go ahead

with the plan, Knowlton said, the agency will have to get the money from the state Division of the Budget.

Other uses for the building are also being explored, including one by a group of doctors and other investors who are considering buying the building to turn it into housing for the elderly.

— RON DESJARLAIS

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