

Hearing due on Annadale group home

By WENDY DILLER
Advance Staff Writer

Staten Island Aid for the Retarded has notified Community Board 3 that it wants to lease a new, two-family house in Annadale to use as a group home.

Eight mentally retarded adults would live in the house at 825 Woodrow Rd. Staten Island Aid is now screening potential inhabitants, half of whom would be from the community and half from the Staten Island Developmental Center, according to Joan Hodum, the organization's director.

A public hearing on the proposal will be held Wednesday at 8 p.m. in Richmond Memorial Hospital. The community board has 40 days to respond to the notice, but Maxine Spierer, chairwoman of Community Board 3, said the board wanted to vote on the issue at its June 26 meeting, before adjourning for the summer.

The board can only make a recommendation about the proposal to the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, which has ultimate authority over whether or not to approve it.

Staten Island Aid, a voluntary not-for-profit agency, offers a wide range of services to mentally retarded children and adults. It operates two group homes, in Tottenville and Willobrook.

About a year ago it considered opening a home in Huguenot, and received Community Board 3's support, but eventually the state decided that renovating

the building would be too expensive and the agency dropped the idea.

The Annadale house would be leased for an indefinite time, rather than bought, because the state is no longer reimbursing voluntary agencies which acquire group homes, Mrs. Hodum said. Clients would use their Medicaid stipends to pay for the lease, but Mrs. Hodum wouldn't say how much the rent would be. She also declined to identify the building's owner.

Residents would leave the home to participate for at least six hours a day in the agency's various treatment or training programs in different parts of the Island. At the home, as required by law, they would be treated by visiting social workers, psychologists and speech therapists, Mrs. Hodum said. Other staff members would include a cook-housekeeper, nurse and maintenance worker.

One of the state's real estate agencies, the Facilities Development Corp., inspected the site earlier this spring and issued a report in May which said the building's 1,500-gallon septic system is large enough for use by a group home.

Although soil percolation tests, conducted six years ago, showed that the site could adequately absorb water, Mrs. Spierer said Board 3 would want new tests done before deciding whether to approve the project.

Mrs. Hodum and Carol Rothfield, coordinator of site development for the Staten Island Borough Developmental Services Office, which located the building, said that a satisfactory number of parking spaces adjoin the house. Only minor renovations would have to be done on the building, they said.

Also, they said the building is located at least a half-mile from other group homes in the area, as required by law.

Stan Buraczynski Jr., who chairs Board 3's health and hospitals committee, said, "Some of our members have been to look at the property, and we'll all go see it before (Wednesday's) hearing. "There are only certain reasons why we or the board can reject it — if it is structurally unsound or if it's within half a mile of another group home."

"It's a very lovely home," Mrs. Hodum said. "We hope that the neighborhood realizes that any facility we have there will be growing right along with it."