

Board 2 votes against group home

By JIM BUELL
Advance Staff Writer

Community Board 2 last night dealt a blow to plans for a group home for teen-age boys in Meiers Corners, a community which already has several similar facilities.

Acting against the recommendation of its health service committee, the board voted 33-0 to oppose the Catholic Home Bureau's planned move to 22 Livingston Ave. Four members abstained.

About 20 members of the Livingston Avenue Civic Association attended the board's monthly meeting, held in the Nurses' Residence building of Sea View Hospital and Home, to protest the committee recommendation.

The board's vote came after members learned that police have been called several times

to quell disturbances allegedly created by residents of the bureau's current group home at 72 Wellbrook Ave., also in Meiers Corners. The bureau proposes to move residents of the Wellbrook Avenue home to Livingston Avenue, and has already put down a \$3,000 security deposit on the planned home.

Until earlier this year, the Livingston Avenue site housed a similar group home run by the

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Salvation Army.

Henry Vogt, health services committee chairman, acknowledged that he told the bureau's representatives over the summer that the board was unlikely to oppose the move. Vogt said last night his committee was unaware of neighborhood opposition until the civic association contacted him early this month.

But board member Arnold Obey, president of the Wellbrook Avenue Civic Association, said he had contacted the board about problems at the current location as early as last May.

About a dozen boys deemed by Family Court to be "persons in need of supervision" reside at the home, which is owned by the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin at Mount Loretto, Pleasant Plains. Mount Loretto proposes to take over operation of the Wellbrook Avenue facility itself, according to a notice filed with the board.

District Manager Lillian Prado admitted uncertainty about the effect of last night's vote. Community boards are empowered to rule on placement of new group homes, she said, but the board might not have that power in this instance because the location previously housed the Salvation Army facility.

Vogt said a dozen group homes catering to a variety of clients are located within a half-mile radius of the Wellbrook Avenue property.

In other action, board Chairman Edmund J. Murphy stepped up his attack on the College of Staten Island's proposal to consolidate its campuses on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook, which is preparing to close.

He described as "lies" the statistics the college cites to show that construction in Willowbrook would be less expensive than at a site along Capodanno Boulevard, Ocean Breeze, which was long targeted as the site of a combined campus.

Murphy said the Ocean Breeze property's sandy subsoil poses no problems of flooding and noted that Staten Island Hospital, which is adjacent to the proposed site, has had no flood-related problems. He also charged that the college has inflated the cost it says would be necessary to drive pilings for building foundations.

Murphy said he plans to send letters today to state Sen. John J. Marchi, who favors the Willowbrook location for the campus, and Gov. Mario M. Cuomo, "detailing the board's longstanding support for Ocean Breeze." The site's proximity to the hospital and to South Beach Psychiatric Center might also enhance

the college's medical-related programs, he said.

James Walsh, director of the developmental center, also addressed the meeting. He outlined the center's plan to house about 160 severely handicapped Island residents in small group homes as part of a facility which would occupy nine of the center's 382 acres.

Yaffa Dratman, chairwoman of the education committee, praised the Community School Board's decision to support transferring some of the land at

PS 54, Willowbrook, to the city Parks and Recreation Department for use as a nature preserve. But she cautioned that the transfer is not final until the city Board of Education approves it.

The board also took about 20 minutes out of its agenda for an impromptu wine and cake party for Murphy, who is to be married this weekend. At the conclusion of the meeting, board members contributed a total of \$100 to the Statue of Liberty Fund and issued a challenge to Community Boards 1 and 3 to match the donation.

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