

## *Court to expedite group home hearing*

The Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court has agreed to expedite a hearing on the state's appeal of an Island judge's temporary order barring the construction of four group homes at the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook.

The appeals court directed lawyers for the state attorney general's office and the Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, an environmental group, to submit briefs in time for the case to be argued on Feb. 28.

The state is appealing Judge Rose McBrien's order of Jan. 2, granting the environmental group a preliminary injunction barring the state from proceeding with construction of the group homes until a trial on whether a permanent injunction

should be granted.

The environmental group is seeking to prevent further damage to Corson's Brook Woods, a natural area on the center's grounds. The environmentalists brought the court case after 40 trees had been destroyed and underbrush removed as part of the site preparation work for two of the homes.

The environmentalists say they do not oppose the group homes, but only want to see the sites of the homes relocated on the center's grounds away from the wooded area.

The state decided to build the group homes in an effort to comply with a 9-year-old federal order to incorporate handicapped residents of the center into the community.