

BP 'just shy' of endorsing CSI site

By JIM BUELL
Advance Staff Writer

Borough President Ralph Lamberti last night all but endorsed selection of the Staten Island Developmental Center site for a consolidated College of Staten Island campus.

"I'm just coming shy of an endorsement," Lamberti told fellow Borough Board members at a meeting in Borough Hall, following a brief presentation by CSI President Edmond L. Volpe.

The borough president suggested possible uses for the college's Sunnyside and St. George campuses once they are vacated, and for a third site in Ocean Breeze previously considered for the consolidation.

In other action, the board lambasted the Transit Authority for presenting a revised version of its plan to eliminate the Grymes Hill shuttle bus during a hearing Monday night before a Community Board 1 committee, rather than before the Borough Board.

Lamberti's only reservation about a CSI request for 187 acres at the developmental center, he said, is that other groups requesting a piece of the 382-acre Willowbrook land for their own programs receive fair consideration. Their proposals, as well as

CSIs, will be discussed at a hearing tomorrow at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of Sea View Hospital and Home.

Community Board 2 Chairman Edmund Murphy, whose board still favors consolidating at Ocean Breeze, had asked the Borough Board to invite Volpe to last night's meeting. However, Murphy himself failed to attend the session.

Contacted afterward, Murphy said he was ill, and added that a Borough Hall official told him at 4:30 p.m. that snow would probably force cancellation of the meeting. He also said the official reassured him no advisory vote would be taken on the proposal.

No vote was taken last night, and Lamberti said none would be until a formal proposal comes before the board.

Volpe said he had never fully supported consolidating at Ocean Breeze because the low-lying land there would necessitate elevating buildings to preclude flooding. "The idea of having to build a whole college on stilts ... kind of turned me off," he said.

Community Board 3 Chairwoman Maxine Spierer urged that the college study how to minimize traffic tie-ups a Willowbrook campus might create,

before deciding whether to move there.

Susan Moore Mouner, chairwoman of Community Board 1, also expressed concern about transportation difficulties but said she personally believes the developmental center "would make a very nice campus."

City Councilman Frank Fossella also expressed support for the Willowbrook site.

While supporting a CSI consultant's conclusion that Willowbrook would be a good site for a campus, Lamberti said he is "totally opposed" to another aspect of that report which suggested selling off the Ocean Breeze and Sunnyside properties to developers for high-rise condominiums.

"If they decide not to go to Ocean Breeze, I see it as a possible site for recreation for the whole borough," he said. "I'm not proposing or suggesting anything, but my staff is exploring the idea."

Among possibilities the borough president envisions for the site are a running track for boroughwide meets and an Olympic-size swimming pool. "We have the property there and we have the parking there," he said.

As for the current Sunnyside campus, Lamberti suggested it

might prove suitable for a high school or technical school.

He also said his office will delay acting on any proposals by developers for new office complexes in St. George, until it can be determined whether CSI's current St. George buildings could be turned into office space.

In a separate discussion of the Transit Authority's revised plan for eliminating shuttle service to Grymes Hill, Borough Board members agreed that the T.A. should have come back to them with the revision rather than to the transportation committee of Community Board 1.

At a public hearing called by the Borough Board in November, Lamberti recalled, he told the T.A. "that we would not stand for any reduction of services."

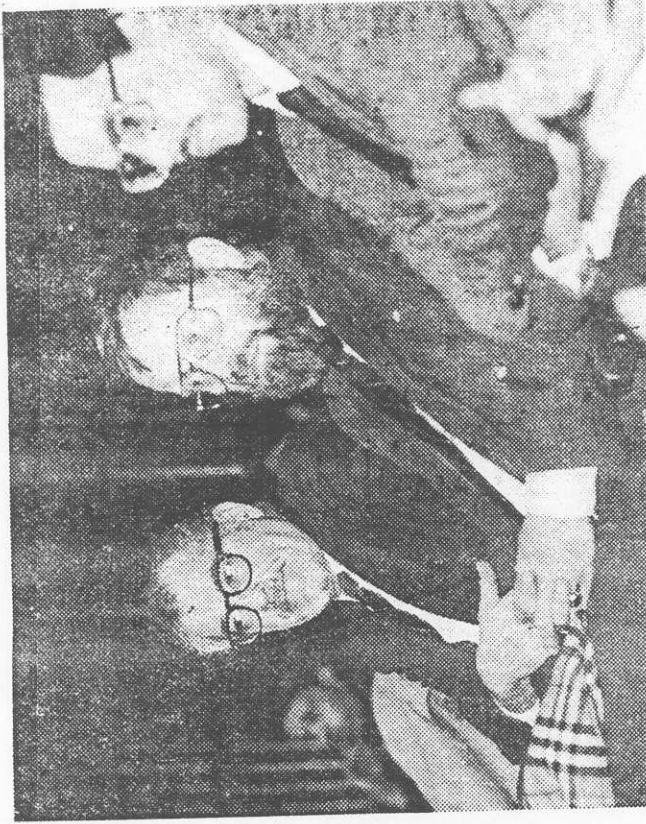
The T.A.'s decision to address the committee this week "acted in good faith," the borough president continued. "I think the T.A. will have some accomplished only two things, with us" on route changes and Lamberti said. "They got the similar matters.

public all excited and vocal. Also present were about 40 members of the Black and Latin Economic Survival Group,

City Councilman Jerome X. O'Donovan also expressed dis-satisfaction with the T.A.'s decision to address the community other boroughs against alleged board panel but said he does not blame the community board for ion industry. Members had not scheduling the meeting. The Board 1 panel voted to reject the not address the meeting. plan.



Borough President Ralph Lamberti, left, confers with Frank Fossella at the city councilman's first Borough Board meeting.



Preparing to discuss the College of Staten Island's proposed move to Willowbrook at a Borough Board meeting are, from the left, CSI President Edmond Volpe; Ken Klindtworth, the college's director of facilities, and Steve Higgins, its director for alumni and intergovernmental relations.

S.I. Advance Photos by Steve Zaffarano