

Hearing

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Breeze Civic Association, who argued that the college should build its consolidated campus at a 110-acre site in Ocean Breeze. CSI had been planning to relocate to Ocean Breeze until last year, when the Willowbrook site became available.

"If the college doesn't go to Ocean Breeze, we will have been sold out," Careccia said. "That land was condemned years ago and people lost their homes so that CSI could have a site for a new campus... it put a hardship on a lot of people."

He expressed anger that the land now may be sold for "high-rise development."

Those feelings were echoed by Edmund Murphy, chairman of Community Board 2, which has endorsed the Ocean Breeze site for CSI consolidation. Murphy said Ocean Breeze offers better educational opportunities for the college because of its proximity to Staten Island Hospital.

Moreover, he claimed that Victory Boulevard, the main access road to the Willowbrook site, could not handle traffic generated by the college. "If we have 7,000 to 8,000 vehicles (going to the college) every day, they've got to get there somehow," Murphy said. "I don't understand the logic. We are putting ourselves on a highway to chaos."

But Willowbrook-area residents at the hearing ignored the



Office of General Services Commissioner John C. Egan reminds the group that his office has no jurisdiction over the controversial Corson's Brook Woods as he presides at hearings on SIDC land.

gloomy predictions.

"I live in Willowbrook and any traffic problem would be mine," said one speaker. "But it doesn't bother me, because I would feel good about the college being there."

"Community Board 2 doesn't represent me or my neighbors," said Philip Stern of Willowbrook. "We would welcome CSI

in our midst.

Willowbrook resident Robert Levine said he would rather have the state transfer the property to CSI than sell the land to developers. "The college proposal has the overwhelming support of the Willowbrook community," he added.

The college proposal was also endorsed by environmentalists, a representative from the CSI student body, and an advocate for the mentally retarded.

Ronald Clohossy, a CSI student, said the majority of students think Willowbrook is the best site for the new campus. "The three overriding thoughts among students are time, money and a central location," Clohossy said.

He noted that the Willowbrook site would be less expensive for the college to develop, and could be developed more quickly, because existing buildings could be renovated. Moreover, Willowbrook is more centrally located for Island students, he said.

Sonia Braniff, representing the SIDC Board of Visitors, said that CSI's relocation to Willowbrook would have a "positive effect" on clients who will continue to live in group homes on the southeast corner of the Willowbrook campus.

She said her group was excited about plans for the college to form a working relationship with the retarded population, by providing technical assistance and offering educational programs on retardation to college students.

Environmentalists — including Tom Stokes of Friends of the Earth, several members of the Protectors of Pine Oak Woods and CSI's environmental science program — also said they could work with the college plan. The relocation proposal includes preservation of the Willowbrook woodlands.

The environmentalists also spoke about another issue — the protection of Corson's Brook Woods, a 40-acre tract which environmentalists want included in the Staten Island Greenbelt. However, the woodlands are located on a 90-acre parcel of the developmental center which the state is retaining to build group homes for mentally retarded.

John Egan, commissioner of the state Office of General Services and chairman of the Willowbrook property task force, said his panel has no say over Corson's Brook Woods. "The only property I'm allowed to consider is that property which has been declared surplus," he said. "I have no jurisdiction over the 90 acres being retained by OMRDD (the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities)."

But environmentalists still sounded their plea. One of the speakers was Terence Benbow, attorney for the Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, which has taken the state to court to prevent the group home construction.

Turning to Arthur Webb, OMRDD commissioner, Benbow said: "You have forced us to go to court... We have said 'let's sit down and reason together.' We'd like to work together with you — not in the courts, but in mechanisms like this."