

Opinion/

For SIBC land, a modest proposal

By BEATRICE VICTOR

This proposal is made because of multiple needs existing on Staten Island, because the timing is right and because we feel that the basic energies which are buried in antagonism can be harnessed to create an unusual community which will fill these needs.

We believe the following concept can be utilized in the area left after the tract of land allotted to the College of Staten Island has been set aside:

The population served would be: 1. The developmentally disabled; 2. senior citizens with modest means; 3. Young families with and without children and/or single individuals; 4. Environmentalists.

We have a tract of land that is large enough to become a small community — no different than the communities which are being built all over the Island. The state mandate that the developmentally disabled must be housed in a normalized community could easily be accomplished in such an environment.

However, there are other seg-

ments of our population, as described above, which have needs. We visualize building an interdependence involving all of these groups, improving their sense of dignity, community spirit, social consciousness and physical and moral well-being.

Private business could still benefit and there would be added tax revenue through the building and existence of this community.

● The developmentally disabled. By creating a total community the DD would naturally be part of the start of the effort. Others in the community would be aware when they purchased or rented their homes that this concept existed. The positives for the client and the state are numerous:

Normal hostility and resistance would be non-existent, therefore time and money expended on combating the above could be saved.

The atmosphere would lend itself to the development of positive programs involving the rest of the community;

The non-profit organizations could start group homes, etc., within guidelines as to how many the number of clients should be (this might require a modification of some existing regulations);

The state could truly restrict itself to the regulatory status it has referred to in the past. At the same time it could develop, if absolutely necessary, any program it must;

Respite care should be more easily developed in this environment (a continuing desperate need which has yet to be addressed in this area) because it could be worked into an agreement at the time of purchase or rental for either a barter or a financial benefit.

● The Senior Citizens are a group who more and more require financial and medical aid which is paid for with our tax dollars. Very often they can no longer be cared for by loving families (and not so loving families); they are not too ill to live at home but they are not capable of taking care of their own needs.