

# —It's your opinion—

## *Island must plan for CSI campuses*

Recent Advance editorials raising concern about the future use of the St. George and Sunnyside campuses of the College of Staten Island upon consolidation are most welcome and should be well-heeded by the community. Your voice in vigorous support of intense public involvement in the disposition of surplus public land will surely be appreciated by those of us who have long championed the cause.

Almost two years ago, in a statement to the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York, I warned that I could not support a unified CSI campus, if there was not "prior to construction, a realistic plan to convert the current campuses to an acceptable alternative use."

This alien thought went unnoticed by most and provoked unfounded worry, among others that a consolidated campus could get sidetracked by it. Time and again, I wrote and spoke of my concern for the neighborhoods of Sunnyside and St. George where CSI campuses would be dislocated.

Finally, through my efforts and with the active aid of Assembly Member Elizabeth A. Connelly, we inserted language in the state budget appropriation which produced the CSI master plan for Willowbrook that required consideration of the future of the St. George and Sunnyside campuses, which would be ultimately abandoned by the college. The road is clearly paved for the public discussion and public planning the Advance editorially suggests is appropriate.

This is what we are now doing for the Willowbrook campus of the Staten Island Developmental Center. It is a kindred spirit to the bill I sponsored in the Assembly to guarantee community input in the closing or consolidation of public schools. Developing publicly arrived at community uses of publicly owned land just makes plain sense.

Urban sprawl housing development was avoided at Miller Field only because of extraordinary action taken by former Congressman John M. Murphy. We might not be so lucky the next time. Already the "highest and best use" ascribed to the Sunnyside and Ocean Breeze

sites by real estate experts is the sale of the property for row construction. Unquestionably, as the knot of development on Staten Island grows tighter and tighter, we must all the more be committed to developing public uses for surplus public land.

The Willowbrook process and the procedures I proposed for school closings offer a framework for decision that will work. I have already committed to it and I expect that, as we wind down at Willowbrook, we will move on expeditiously to St.

George, Sunnyside, Ocean Breeze and Sea View.

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