

Land hearing change asked

By JOHN E. HURLEY
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Protectors of Pine Oak Woods president Richard Buegler said yesterday he has requested that a public hearing on the proposed construction of four group homes in Corson's Brook Woods be rescheduled because it conflicts with another important environmental hearing.

On Friday, the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) released an environmental impact study supporting the group home plan. OMRDD also announced that a public hearing has been scheduled for 7 p.m. on June 27 in the Institute for Basic Research in Mental Retardation, Willowbrook, for discussion of the project.

Buegler said, however, that an important meeting on the future of the Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve is scheduled for the same evening, and will require not only the presence of his group, but also of many of the same city and state officials who should be present at the group home hearing.

In a telegram to OMRDD commissioner Arthur Webb, Buegler has requested that the meeting be scheduled for earlier in the week. The Protectors are also asking for a copy of the EIS itself, which they have not yet seen.

"We certainly hope there's going to be some kind of response," Buegler said yesterday. "We're not very hopeful about their attitude. It looks as if they (OMRDD) just want to blast ahead."

Buegler also questioned the timing of the EIS, noting that

Gov. Mario Cuomo is scheduled to tour the Corson's Brook Woods site, possibly as early as this week.

"We expect Cuomo to make some kind of compromise," Buegler said.

Although he has not read the report, Buegler noted that the study did not seem to include any of the alternate sites suggested by the Protectors. He also challenged the study's conclusion that the four group homes will not adversely affect the woodland tract.

"I can't imagine any EIS that would say putting a building in that 9-acre portion would have no impact whatsoever," Buegler said. "It certainly does have an impact on many things."

The group home project has been under fire ever since the proposal was made public in March 1984. The state wants to build two 12-bed and two 24-bed facilities to house severely retarded and multi-handicapped Islanders who will be leaving the Staten Island Developmental Center when the institution shuts down in 1987.

The state says that the Corson's Brook site along Forest Hill Road in Willowbrook was selected because the land is already state-owned and because it adjoins a residential community.

When the state began site clearing in November, the Protectors went to court and obtained a temporary injunction to block construction. However an appeals court overturned the injunction last month, leaving the state free to begin the construction.