

# Staten Island

Wednesday, March 12, 1986

## Corson's Brook ruling 'reasonable'

By MARY ENGELS

Daily News Staff Writer

Both environmentalists and advocates for the developmentally disabled claimed victory when Gov. Cuomo made a decision on the relocation of a group home project planned for Corson's Brook Woods on part of the former Willowbrook Developmental Center site.

That long-awaited project had been planned by the Staten Island Developmental Center (now at the Willowbrook site) for land that had been sought by the environmentalist group, Protectors of the Pine Oak Woods.

The Protectors had led the fight against the project because its original site was on an environmentally sensitive area, Corson's Brook Woods, located on the Willowbrook property.

They led the fight in the courts and they led the fight to Albany and to Cuomo, who in June toured the controversial site at the request of the Protectors.

Dick Buegler, the Protectors president, called it "a reasonable solution and one that meets all concerns, environmentalists and the retarded."

Buegler also said it "is particularly significant that the site chosen—Executive Way—was the one we had said all along was the best one."

Terence Benbow, counsel for the Protectors, said, "It has been a long and important battle, but we knew we were going to win."

James Walsh, the director of the Developmental Center, although not exactly pleased about the decision, said, "Overall, I think the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities did very well."

### 'Dedicated efforts'

"The plan is the result of the dedicated efforts of many individuals during the past several months," he added.

It calls for the closing of the current Staten Island De-

velopmental Center by March 31 of next year.

In its place, a combination of programs and services will be provided for the Island's developmentally disabled population by a number of existing agencies.

Those services will be in residential units supervised by the Staten Island Borough Developmental Services Office, and will include 48 new beds to be built on Executive Way in the center of the former Willowbrook property.

### Small residences

Walsh said, "This project will involve the construction of three, small residences at this site, two with 12 beds, and one with 24 beds."

"It will require a modification of our planned 72-bed facility at Corson's Brook, but we will be picking up additional beds by expanding state-operated community residential programs by 30 beds to a total of 117 by March 31, 1987."

Walsh also said, "When we originally planned our

phaseout of the Developmental Center, we requested from the state 90 acres on the Willowbrook property. We have now picked up about 179, almost double that space, and that is good."

### Got Cuomo okay

The new plan, also approved by Cuomo, includes a multipurpose community treatment center to provide a range of day and recreational programs for clients in both state and voluntary provider residences.

This facility also will contain a therapeutic pool of special benefit to the clients.

In addition, there will be the development of a long-range capital construction plan for the expansion of the Institute for Basic Research, which is located on the perimeter of the Developmental Center.

Walsh said, "We did well, but I still feel we would have done better with the Corson's Brook site. We've lost the battle, but won the war, I guess you could say."