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Group home plan protested

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Rosebank residents and members of Community Board 1's Human Resources and Rosebank Area committees last night voiced their opposition to a United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) proposal to place a group home for disabled adolescents on Evelyn Place in Rosebank.

Most of those attending last night's meeting, which took place in the board's Tompkinsville headquarters, said Rosebank has become "oversaturated" with homes for disabled people.

"We're not concerned about the type of people that will be living in these homes," said John Guzzo, a member of the board's Rosebank Committee. "We're concerned about the fact that within three square blocks of Evelyn Place we have six other group homes."

Some in attendance cited problems that presently exist in the community as a result of other group homes already in the area.

"I'm being disturbed by the kids ... One kid walks around and talks loud all the time, talking, talking, and talking," said Flora Rodri-

guez, who lives near Evelyn Place. "I hear it through my window at night. It's too much. We have too many [homes] already here."

But according to Ed Mathews, executive director of UCP in the city, disturbances and inconveniences caused by disabled individuals are no more frequent than those caused by local residents.

"These [disabled] people are just like anybody else in the community ... Most normal kids are capable of causing more of a disturbance than these people do," said Mathews.

He added: "Our job is to fit in ... We'd like to live here and be a part of the community and have the youngsters and the staff be accepted by you."

Mathews, who recently opened a UCP group home in Brooklyn, said that many communities gradually grow accustomed to group homes and eventually rescind their opposition to them.

He said: "In the last residence we've built, every one was concerned and worried. But in less than a year, we had neighbors coming to the residence to bake cakes."