

## THE ISLAND

# Civic groups discuss law governing purchase of homes for disabled

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Community Board 1 held a meeting last night for local civic associations to discuss the Padvan Law, officially known as the Community Residence Site Selection Law, which sets the guidelines state agencies follow when opening homes for the disabled.

During the meeting in All Saints' Episcopal Church, Willowbrook, Robert Witkowsky, director of the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services office of the State of New York Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, discussed some misconceived notions about the law.

Charles Langere, Board 1 member, asked how the purchase price

of a home is decided. Langere said that in his Concord community, a house on Britton Avenue was recently sold for use as a community residence for \$300,000, and houses in the area are not worth that much.

Witkowsky said independent state appraisers visit a proposed home and check on how much other homes in the area have sold for. Market value is decided and the state is not allowed to pay one dollar more than that price, regardless of how much the homeowner is asking.

When presented with a proposed home for the developmentally disabled, a community board can only accept the proposed site, suggest alternative sites or object to the proposed site on the grounds of saturation, Witkowsky said.

Theresa Rafferty, Board 1 chairwoman, said saturation refers to the number of similar facilities in the neighborhood, not to all other social service facilities in the area. Also, the law is vague, she said, since it does not give a specific number of homes that would be considered saturation.

Langere added that sometimes after a home is bought, even more money is used to rehabilitate the home. He said when the total costs are added up, it seems the state is overpaying for the home.

Witkowsky said that \$75,000 to \$78,000 is the maximum allowed per person who will live there. For example, if the home is to be for five people, the most that can be spent on the home, plus any amenities or other costs, would be \$390,000.

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