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News

Staten Island Advance

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Residence plans draw familiar fire

Community Board 1 committee votes in favor of 3 proposals despite opposition from neighbors

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In what seemed a replay of debates held earlier this year, New Brighton residents last night came out in force to voice their opposition to a community residence for people with developmental disabilities.

More than 100 people attended a meeting in All Saints' Episcopal Church, Willowbrook, where Community Board 1's St. George and Westerleigh area committees and its human resources committee voted in favor of three separate community residence proposals.

The residences include one to be run by Community Resources for the Developmentally Disabled for five elderly developmentally disabled adults at 17 Sommers Lane, Castleton Corners; one run by United Cerebral Palsy for four adults with mild mental retardation at 156 Watchogue Rd., Westerleigh, and one run by On Your Mark for six adults with autism at 275 Lafayette Ave., New Brighton.

The Lafayette Avenue home generated the most opposition.

The committee votes will go to the board's steering committee, and then to the full board when it meets Sept. 12. But the board votes are merely advisory; ultimately, approval of the homes is up to the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

The tone of the meeting was similar to several Board 1 meetings earlier this year, when social service agencies discussed their state-funded facilities with the board and the public, and faced relentless interruptions and questioning from audience members.

Like other North Shore residents who discussed the topic earlier this year, some speakers at last night's meeting complained there were simply too many residences in their neighborhoods, and that it was time for other areas on Staten Island to accept some.

Joe Carroll, district manager of Board 1, discussed the Padavan Law, which allows community boards three options when faced with a proposed site for a community residence for the developmentally disabled: 1. Accept the proposed

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