

Island news

Group home close to board approval

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Staten Island Aid Inc. has completed the first step towards getting approval to operate a proposed group home in Pleasant Plains.

Community Board 3's human resource committee endorsed the organization's application during a meeting in Richmond Memorial Hospital last night.

Staten Island Aid's proposal still must be approved by the full community board and the state Office of Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities.

Staten Island Aid plans to operate a home for 10 severely mentally retarded adults at 149 Sharrott Ave.

The home is owned by Downs Inc., a group of families whose four children will live in the home. The home's other six residents will come from the community, according to Joan Hodum, executive director of Staten Island Aid.

Ms. Hodum said Downs Inc. will lease the home to Staten Island Aid. "The state is looking to this home to set a precedent for new ventures," she said.

Last May, the board opposed the corporation's proposal because of lack of information about the house's sewage system.

Since the board's rejection, Staten Island Aid has designed a new

septic tank with drainage rings, and the property has passed a percolation test given by the city Health Department.

Staten Island Aid also redesigned the driveway of the home, so cars do not have to back out onto Sharrott Avenue.

Ms. Hodum said the home's residents will be supervised around the clock, and the property around the home will be fenced in. The majority of the staff will work from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., according to Ms. Hodum.

The residents will be transported by van to different day-care facilities, she said.

Staten Island Aid operates three group homes in the Board 3 area and has never had any major problems, according to Ms. Hodum.

"They're very well run very attractive homes," she said. "We take pride in being part of the community."

She said Staten Island Aid would form an advisory committee, consisting of community residents.

"The committee comes in with ideas. It isn't just a period of criticism each month," Ms. Hodum said.

Community Board 3 will vote on the application during its general meeting Jan. 24 in Richmond Memorial Hospital.