

CB1 committee supports group home for retarded

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A Fort Wadsworth neighborhood's opposition to a proposed residential group home for severely retarded young men is outweighed by the need for such facilities, Community Board 1's human resources committee decided last night.

The committee will recommend that the full board approve Independent Living Association's proposed 197 Hope Ave. intermediate care facility. The full board will vote on the matter at its Dec. 12 meeting, and board members say approval is likely.

Independent Living, a non-

profit group, has proposed a family-style residential home for 11 retarded Staten Island men, most of whom currently live with their parents. But their parents can no longer care for them, and the home would ease the burden on the families.

At an Oct. 25 meeting in Rosebank, residents angrily opposed the plan, saying the home was inappropriate for the neighborhood.

"We need a place like this — I'm tired of people saying 'Not in my backyard,'" board member Joann McCarthy said, citing the

155 retarded Staten Islanders on waiting lists for residential homes.

John Welch, Independent Living's executive director, pledged to work with the community to make the home a good

neighbor. Both Welch and board members said a community advisory board should be formed to educate the neighborhood and help the facility run smoothly.

"Those who fought the hardest will become our best friends," Welch said.

Monsignor John Servodidio, pastor of St. Joseph's R.C. Church in Rosebank, suggested the advi-

sory board be established immediately.

"This way the community can see it's not getting a monster," he explained. "They're getting a person who is fragile, for all intents and purposes."

Welch agreed, explaining that the intellectual capacity of the adult residents is equal to that of a 3-year-old.

Responding to board questions about the site, Welch showed blue-

prints of the proposed home and said staff members would car-pool to reduce the parking problems that could arise.

In addition, an average of three staff members would be on duty at all times in the seven-bedroom house. Residents would leave for workshops at 7:30 a.m. and return to the home around 4:30 p.m. Recreational time at the state-funded home would be highly structured, and, for their own safety, residents would not be allowed to venture about the neighborhood.