

Group home plan riles residents

By ROBERT V. WOLF
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

The prospect of a new state-run group home in their neighborhood has some mid-Island residents up in arms, Community Board 2 officials said last night.

Within the next 10 days, the board expects to receive a plan from the state to operate a group home for 10 severely handicapped people at a site on Rockland Avenue, a street that stretches from Egbertville through Sea View to New Springville.

Board members, at a steering committee meeting last night, said most group homes in their area have had excellent track records and hoped the community would not resist the plan. But Lillian Prado, Board 2's district manager, said she has already received "a number of calls from

the community" expressing opposition to the plan.

The callers, she said, "had NIMBY over their heads." NIMBY — or "not in my backyard" — refers to the opposition that has often greeted projects whose only detractors are its neighbors. Many of the group homes in the Board 2 area, which covers the middle of the Island, initially met with neighborhood resistance.

"There has not been one complaint from any of the group homes for mental patients with Board 2," Mrs. Prado said.

The board will hold a public hearing on the plan within 45 days after it receives official notice from the state. "The public hearing could be pretty heated," Board 2 Chairman James Chin said.

The only grounds for rejecting

the home is if the area is oversaturated with similar facilities, according to Mrs. Prado.

A board member who seven years ago unsuccessfully opposed the placement of a group home in his Dongan Hills neighborhood said he would now welcome a group home to his area.

"You wouldn't even know they're there. And the site is better now than it was before," Bernard Kosinski said.

Mrs. Prado did not know the exact location of the site, but said the 10 residents for the proposed group home would be transferred from the Staten Island Developmental Center.

The state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities could not be reached last night for comment.