

Community board votes against group home proposal

Members complain that area has too many similar facilities

By EILEEN AJ CONNELLY
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

The Community Board 2 area I committee voted last night to oppose the siting of a group home for mentally retarded adults in South Beach, and asked the agency building the home to find another site in an area with fewer publicly funded facilities.

But the agency was not convinced after meeting with the

board that the area is oversaturated, as the board claimed, and is not yet ready to give up the site at 144 Ocean Ave.

Arthur Palevski, associate executive director of the Independent Living Association, which runs several group homes on the Island, explained to the board that his agency would like to construct a two-story house on the site to house 10 mentally retarded

adults, all of whom were residents of the former Willowbrook State School.

The residents would participate in day programs and return to the home in the evenings, he said, and would have planned recreation programs on weekends.

Three of the 10 residents, Palevski said, would be moved to this home from another house on Ocean Avenue. That house, cur-

rently leased by the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, would no longer be a group home.

"We would like this place, this facility, to be the place where they spend the rest of their lives," Palevski said.

Board member Bernard Kosinski maintained that the entire board area is oversaturated with facilities, including homeless shelters, hospital beds, nursing homes and group homes. Other board members, however, said that the problem is the site that the agency has chosen.

That position was also supported by Rosalie Flanagan, the borough president's community board coordinator. Mrs. Flanagan said her office cannot support this site selection because it is too near a nursing home and other facilities. However, she suggested that the agency look a few blocks away, where they will likely find a site the board and borough president could support.

Independent Living Association executive director John Welch said after the meeting he was not convinced that the site they have chosen is in an oversaturated

area. Nor was he convinced that if his agency attempts to find another site, the board would support it. After spending seven months preparing the Ocean Avenue site, he said, he is reluctant to give it up.

The agency has not yet purchased the lot where they want to build the home.

This is the Independent Living Association's first attempt to build in Board 2. It operates several group homes in the Board 1 area.