

S. J. Wadman

10/23/91

Committee defends group home residents

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At a recent rally opposing homeless shelters on Staten Island, one man stood up from the crowd and complained there were enough problems at the "shelter" on Hope Avenue.

Jack Sciarabba, chairman of the Rosebank/Fort Wadsworth/Shore Acres area committee, quickly corrected the man. Project Hope, on the corner of Beethoven Street and Hope Avenue, Fort Wadsworth, he said, was not a homeless shelter, but a group home for the mentally retarded. And, he added, there's a big difference.

Sciarabba still took the complaint to heart. At last night's area committee meeting, he invited directors of Independent Living Association, Inc., a Brooklyn-based agency that runs Project Hope, to answer the complaints.

The agency also runs a home on Faber Street, Port Richmond, and

plans to open a group home on South Greenleaf Avenue, Willowbrook.

The complaints were not directed at the 11 group home residents, Sciarabba said, but at the employees. Often they do not use designated parking spaces, he said. And after the night shift, at about midnight, some employees gather around their cars and talk into the night.

Arthur Palevsky, a director for Independent Living, said he was familiar with the complaints and that one employee, who he believed was responsible for the noise, was fired. An official from the agency, will spring a surprise inspection on the staff to ensure cars are properly parked and there is no excess noise after the second shift ends, he said.

Palevsky also asked the residents to join a community advisory board, expected to meet when enough members are recruited.

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