

Islanders fuming over siting of group homes

Anger obscures city-state distinctions

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Staten Island's anger over the city's plan to erect two homeless shelters here has spilled over to include community-based group homes for the developmentally disabled.

At a recent hearing concerning siting for three group homes in Community Board 3, inflamed residents blasted the board and Mayor David N. Dinkins, charging that the borough is turning into "a dumping ground" for the problems of New York City.

Residents of the three targeted

neighborhoods repeatedly linked state-operated group homes and city homeless shelters. "What's the difference between the homeless and the mentally retarded? We're talking about hiding a city problem," one woman yelled.

State officials acknowledged the confusion and said they understand the residents' concerns. "It's bad timing," said Thomas Tierney, deputy director of administration at the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Service Office (SIDDSO).

But bad timing does not diminish SIDDSO's responsibility to

provide homes for the mentally retarded, under laws that responded to the outcry raised over conditions at large-scale institutions like the former Willowbrook State School, officials noted.

20 new homes planned

SIDDSO was created to operate such homes and oversee those run by private agencies. The agency has plans to open or sponsor 20 homes in Community Boards 2 and 3 by the end of 1992 and to continue to open four or five each succeeding year across the Island, Tierney said.

Plans for the first 20 homes — 10 in each board area — are in

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The house under construction on Faber Street in Port Richmond is being targeted as a group home for the retarded

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