

Residents protest against group home in Annadale

Lack of consultation, fear of city facilities anger them

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About 70 residents picketed in front of an Annadale duplex yesterday afternoon in opposition to a plan to convert the newly built house into a home for retarded adults.

The duplex, at 770-772 Drumgoole Road West between Smyrna and Notus avenues, would

be funded by the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities under the auspices of the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office (SIDDSO), a branch of the agency.

Ten people are to be placed in the home, according to SIDDSO official Kathy Kennedy-Shields. No other information was made available.

With signs that read "save our community," "protect our neighborhood" and "no group homes" the protesters, adults and children alike, waved to passing cars as they marched along Drumgoole Road West.

They said they were leery of the sketchy plan, which they said they learned of "on a fluke": A resident was washing her car when she

was approached by a woman from a nearby civic association who told her of the plan.

Community Board 3's human resource committee recently approved the group home plan; the full board is scheduled to vote on the proposal at its meeting Tuesday. The board vote, however, is merely advisory and cannot stop the plan from proceeding.

Adding to the neighborhood's anxiety is a rumor that the house and an adjacent duplex became

available to the government after a foreclosure. If the state decides there isn't any money to operate a group home the residents worried the land would fall into the city's hands, a thought that spurred voices to rise in anger.

"Just because the state buys it doesn't mean it will always belong to the state," area resident Pat Lamano said.

Because of the city's controversial plan for homeless shelters, the residents said they don't want

the city owning property next door to them.

Of three group home proposals presented to Community Board 3's human resource committee in recent weeks, the Drumgoole Road West site was the only one approved.

The group plans to continue their fight Tuesday at the Community Board 3 meeting, which takes place at 8 p.m. on the grounds of Staten Island University Hospital, Princes Bay.