

Island news

3 group homes accepted by CB2 committee

Sites to house developmentally disabled

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With a roomful of disgruntled neighbors in attendance, the health services committee of Community Board 2 last night unanimously allowed three group homes for the developmentally disabled to be placed within the board area.

The three sites approved by the committee are located at 2778 Amboy Rd., New Dorp; 498 McClean Ave., South Beach, and 1048 S. Railroad Ave., Grant City. Respectively, the group homes will be operated by Staten Island Aid, On Your Mark and the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Service Office (SIDDSO). The health committee's deci-

sion to allow the group homes will be voted on by the full board May 19.

At the meeting held on the grounds of Sea View Hospital and Home, representatives from the three organizations gave presentations on their proposals to a standing-room-only audience, many of whom were residents of the targeted neighborhoods.

Staten Island Aid director Joan Hodum said the Amboy Road group home would be for 10 mildly developmentally disabled people, who will be under 24-hour watch by a two-person staff.

"The mildly retarded look and sound just like us. Some are gainfully employed or are in a work-training program," she said.

"Some will definitely be able to move into their own apartments and move out of our system altogether."

She said her group has placed five similar group homes in Community Board 3 to much opposition, but that opposition dissipates once the residents move into the home.

"Some of the objectors become very close friends of the home," she said. "We would like to lift some of your fears if we can. Our homes are beautifully furnished and kept well."

Last night, however, area residents didn't care about the inside of the home, instead focusing on the actual existence of the group home.

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