

the inadequate services provided to the Island's handicapped. A handicapped person, she said, must make an appointment three days in advance to get a ride for the van service that accommodates the handicapped, but the person will not know whether a van is available until the night before.

"I am concerned that we are not receiving our fair share of assistance," she said, adding, "I believe that if Staten Island were to secede, a better quantity and quality of services would be provided."

Commission members, who are examining ways to cut bureaucracy in a new Island city, asked several speakers whether they favored combining certain agencies, such as cultural arts, parks and recreation. They received mixed reactions.

Some speakers said such combinations could eliminate unnecessary layers of management and decrease bureaucratic red tape,

while others felt uneasy about mixing what amounted to separate interests.

In opposing such consolidations, Kathe Frantz of the Staten Island Cultural Coalition imagined a recreation department gym trainer being assigned to move fragile artwork.

As speakers tried to impress the commissioners with the need for their services, Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano commented that they might be overestimating the commission's power over them. He noted that the commission has

no funding power regarding a post-secession Staten Island. Such funding would come from officials elected at that time. However, the commission will be drafting scenarios for service delivery that could outline a menu of agencies and create a pro forma budget.

The secession commission purposely held yesterday's hearing in a minority community, hoping for more involvement. Commission-

ers noted that the hearing featured the greatest minority turnout of all their meetings.

Helen Settles of Stapleton, however, criticized the commission for being biased in favor of secession and being biased against minorities.

She said, "When you talk about housing, do you mean that people of color will have an equal chance at decent affordable housing without the discriminatory 'steering' to certain sections of the Island? I think not."

Other speakers at the hearing included:

Peter Barbero, chairman of the Snug Harbor Cultural Center; Mary Anne Corrier, borough coordinator for the New York Public Library; John Kastanis, executive vice president of Bayley Seton Hospital; Robert Witkowsky, director of the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Service; Paul Galvin, deputy executive director of Camelot Counseling Center; Kate Bennet, executive director of the Staten Island Children's Museum; Diane Arneith, executive director of the Staten Island AIDS Task Force; Lucille Herring, president of the Sandy Ground Historical Society; Philip Stranieri of the Staten Island Council on the Arts; Terry Rafferty and William Kammann of Project Hospitality; Mark Herman; Ron Sheppard; David Jones and Joseph Peller.

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