

Board 2 turns down zoning variance proposal

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Tempers flared during a Community Board 2 meeting last night in which a developer's proposal for a zoning variance to rent a residential New Dorp building for professional use was turned down.

A vote of 19 to 15 shot down the request by Philip Rampulla, a partner in Rampulla Associates Architects, to the Board of Standards and Appeals to change the current residential zoning for the building at 15 First St.

Rampulla had initially constructed the building — which is now 70 percent complete — as a medical office, but due to a lack of prospective tenants has proposed changing its use. Residents say the variance would ultimately hurt the area by opening the door to more commercial development in New Dorp.

New Dorp residents, fellow developers and others attended the meeting to speak both for and against the proposal, and just after the public session, heated words were exchanged between two opposing New Dorp residents.

After one of the men slapped down the hand of the other and yelled, "Don't you touch me," several board members broke up the confrontation and ushered one of the men out of the room.

While discussing the issue,

board members centered on the apparent lack of parking on First Street, a small dead-end block. Rampulla has argued that according to traffic studies, a professional building would bring one-third the traffic a medical building of the same size would.

"Doctors and medical professionals have to squeeze more appointments in per hour than lawyers do," said member Joe Abbate, who supported the change.

"I just don't think we can assure there are only lawyers going in there," said first vice chairman Dana Magee, noting that the new use group, 6B, would allow a host of other professions to rent the space, including accountants, stockbrokers and advertising agencies.

Rampulla told the members the city Department of Transportation has agreed to allow on-street parking near the building, creating seven additional spaces.

However, Borough Hall representative Rosalie Flannagan said that according to her records the on-street parking was only granted on a temporary basis to facilitate construction vehicles in the area. She said "No Parking" signs will be placed once the construction is complete.

The board also unanimously voted to approve the establishment of a community group home

for autistic people in Dongan Hills.

The not-for-profit group On Your Mark is proposing development of a community home for five autistic people at 17-19 Dongan Hills Ave. The residents will range in age from 13 to 22.

On Your Mark — which already has three other homes in operation on Staten Island — has ensured the board that the home will not alter the look of the community and will not be distinguishable from the other homes in the area.

The board also supported a preliminary draft of the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the Concessions Division of the Parks Department so interested non-profit organizations can apply to use the plot of land off Father Capodanno Boulevard between Ionia Street and Naughton Avenue in Midland Beach for the promotion and production of special events.

In recent months, the Staten Island Recreational Association, a not-for-profit group that raises money for youth groups, has expressed interest in setting up a permanent rodeo facility on the site.

The members also voted to extend the term of a variance for 10 years for a retail florist, general business and offices and parking lot at 2493 Richmond Rd.