

# CB 3 OKs site for group home

By JOHN REEL  
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

The motion to approve the placement of a group home for the developmentally disabled in Oakwood was the only non-unanimous vote at a full Community Board 3 meeting yesterday at Staten Island University Hospital, Prince's Bay.

The Board voted 33-8-2 to approve the placement of a United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) group home for eight severely retarded adult males at 1832 S. Railroad Ave.

Three neighbors of the proposed home spoke during the community contact session.

Jim and Susan Vattiat, a husband and wife, who live two houses away from the proposed home, argued against the site for traffic reasons, saying congestion would put the residents, who will be walked to and from area stores by staff, in serious danger.

"The first time someone gets mowed down, they will get a copy of this," said Mrs. Vattiat, holding up a videotape she took of a man recently run down in front of the proposed home.

Her husband added, "I hope each of you board members drove by the home yourself, and will make your own independent decision."

The Vattiats felt that the board, which had expressed reservations about congestion in the area at a Human Resources Committee meeting last week, had been neglectful in not creating a list of alternate sites.

This list of alternate sites is one option the board has when a group home for the developmentally disabled comes before it, according to Rosalie Flanagan, community board liaison for Borough Hall. The other two options are to accept the site or reject it on account of saturation, which the board has to prove.

Providing a list of alternate sites is "something no board is going to do," said Ms. Flanagan. "You can't have boards going out and choosing homes. It would be a conflict of interests."

UCP, although arriving with five representatives, did not speak during the meeting.

"We didn't think we needed to," said Duane Schielke, associate executive director of UCP for New York State.

Residents of Scarsdale Street in Great Kills were also well-represented at the board meeting.

The New York City Building Department, Highway Division, had proposed that Scarsdale Street, a dead-end, be opened to Nelson Avenue, to help accommodate traffic anticipated from the new Casey Funeral Home, soon to be built at the corner of Nelson and the now-blockaded portion of Scarsdale.

A resident from every home on the dead-end portion of Scarsdale made the meeting, and argued that an extended Scarsdale would become a "speedway" and put at risk hundreds of youths who cross Scarsdale each day to get to PS 8 and St. Clare's School. Both schools are located nearby on Lindenwood Road, where Scarsdale currently opens.

The board unanimously agreed to keep the street closed, and to de-map the barricaded portion.

Another key unanimous vote was to accept the additional acreage of Long Pond Park. Last week, City Planning and the Parks Department had presented a plan to increase the Richmond Valley park to 110 acres.

But the board unanimously opposed City Planning's proposal to auction off portions of land at Page Avenue and Hylan Boulevard. The board hoped the land would be used for recreation.

Vinny DeSantis was chosen to chair this year's officer nominating committee. Other committee members will be Frank Ponisi, Charles Talley, Joyce Spinelli and Dorothy Fitzpatrick, with Bill D'Ambrosio as an alternate.

Annette Battista, of Oakwood, resigned from the board last month. Barry Kaufman, of Pleasant Plains, was recently appointed to the board by Councilman Vito J. Fossella Jr. (R-South Shore). Kaufman will serve on the Senior Citizens Committee.

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