

Home for Battered Women Stirs Controversy

By JOAN M. SMITH
 In March 1975, Holy Angels Home at 1326 North Winton Road, ceased operating as a haven for troubled girls. Since then, the property has been up for sale and a recent contingent purchase offer by Ireland Enterprises, has led to a community crisis. The conflict came to a head on July 27 when the Town of Irondequoit Planning Commission denied, without prejudice, a zoning variance requested by the Alternatives for Battered Women Organization which wishes to lease the convent building, for one year, from the prospective buyers.

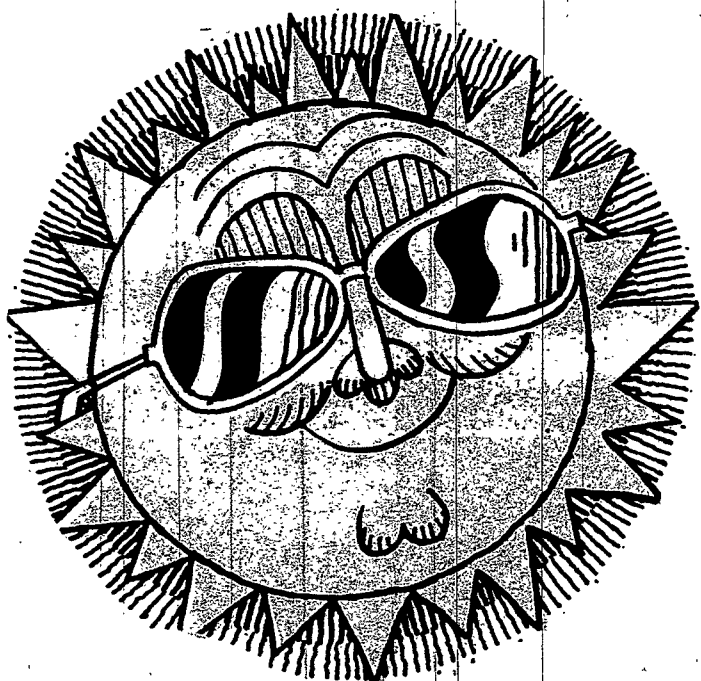
Over 200 people turned out for the meeting to hear the cases presented. Many residents living around the Home were opposed to the variance which could possibly change the zone from residential to commercial. They also voiced their concern over the fate of the other buildings on the 11 acre piece of property. There are five buildings and thus far plans have just been projected for the convent building the AWB proposes to lease.
 Ms. Margaret Grosshans, executive director for Alternatives for Battered Women, presented the organization's request. She

answered questions about the association's financial circumstances, and security precautions described the battered women program and presented plans for the organization's use of the building. According to Ms. Grosshans, the building is ideal for their purpose because it has 14 bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, playroom and study all in one location. Through statistics and accounts of her visits to other battered women homes she emphasized the need for such a facility in this area and stated, "It's time we acted in a positive manner."
 According to opposition

forces, a battered women facility in the neighborhood wasn't the issue.
 "The only issue," declared Vincent Mascitti, a Winton Road resident, "is the zoning."
 Anthony Savine who lives across the street from the Home agreed that the commercial zoning was the main concern.
 "The general feeling," he observed, "is that an economic strain would be put on the neighborhood."
 The July 27 Commission decision doesn't shut the door to further negotiation on the matter and Ms. Grosshans

said that the ABW will pursue its objective until it becomes too expensive or time consuming. The Courier-Journal tried contacting Ireland Enterprises about its plans concerning the matter but as of this date has not had a return call.
 It was under the auspices of Bishop John Francis O'Hearn that the Sisters of the Lady of Charity came to Rochester and opened the Home for girls. The original building was dedicated on Feb. 8, 1931 with further additions in 1941 and a new school building opening in 1969. In its 44 years of operation the Home

cared for girls 10-16 who were delinquent, neglected, retarded or having behavioral problems. Holy Angels offered them a program of health and medical care; personal care and social development, religious training, education, recreation and treatment services. Reasons for closing the Home in 1975 were that the size of the religious community of sisters had decreased increasing the number of professional and non-professional staff members to be recruited and economic losses. Now, until legal difficulties are clarified, the fate of Holy Angels rests in limbo.



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