

Bellerose library OK'd

Panel bows to pressure

By MIKE HUREWITZ

Under intense pressure from the Borough President and community leaders in eastern Queens, the Queens Library Board has reversed itself and voted to open the Bellerose library.

But the board, warning that it will mean "adjustments in service throughout the system," said it will have to decide in the next few weeks what those cuts would be.

Milton S. Byam, director of the system, has said there are insufficient funds to both open the Bellerose branch and maintain the recently restored five-day service throughout the system.

In voting the opening, the board said it would not take over the finished but vacant building from the city until Nov. 1. But it pledged to open the branch on Hillside Av. and 205th St. "no later than March 1, 1978."

OPEN MEETING

Their reversal came at a special meeting yesterday in which the normally private board opened its doors to presentations by, among others, Borough President Donald R. Manes, state Sen. Frank Padavan (RC-Jamaica Estates), Assemblyman John Esposito (RC-Queens Village), Councilman Matthew



MILTON S. BYAM

J. Troy Jr. (D-Queens Village). John J. Santucci said his of-
leaders.

Manes told the board the Queens delegation had been able to restore \$400,000 for Queens libraries in the city budget only because it thought it had a commitment to open the Bellerose branch.

He said if it was a \$400,000 misunderstanding" based on conversations between his aides and Byam, the board should now amend its \$17

million budget to open the branch.

His deputy, Lawrence Gresser, said, "It was like hell's own agony" to wring the extra money from the city and that it would be impossible to get additional city funds to open Bellerose, as some in the audience suggested.

Troy, who had made the library a top personal priority, said Byam went back on commitments on two occasions, concluding: "When it is two occasions it doesn't become a misunderstanding, it becomes a change in facts and a try at changing history."

After a 15-minute closed executive session Rabbi Josiah Derby, chairman of the board, announced the Bellerose decision.

Seymour Seplowe, co-chairman of the Queens Coalition for Neighborhood Libraries, praised the move, and Gresser pledged to push the city to repair \$10,000 in vandalism damage and other work needed at the library.



Post Photo by Robert Kalfus

Twins out for a spin

Courtney and Cara Richards, who will be having their first double-trouble birthday party on Sept. 3, seem to be enjoying the view from their double stroller as they're taken for a ride along 138th St. yesterday near Flushing home.