
RIO DEL MAR

Improvement Association

Spring 2025 Newsletter



RDMIA Semi-Annual Spring Meeting:
Rio Sands Hotel Meeting Room
Wednesday, April 16th, 2025, at 6:30 PM

REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW FOR 2025
The annual Membership Fee is \$30 (Use the enclosed form or pay online)

Spring 2025 RDMIA Newsletter Highlights:

- Meet your new District 2 County Supervisor, Kim De Serpa!
- Whaley Sculpture at Esplanade Restoration Campaign
- Restoration work at Rio Del Mar Beach
- RDMIA Landscaping Efforts, by Committee Chair, Linda Neuman



Spring Newsletter

**The Semi-Annual meeting of the RDMIA will be held on
Wednesday, April 16th**

Rio Sands Meeting Room, 6:30 pm. Doors open at 6:00 pm.

Speakers will include:

Kim De Serpa, District 2 Supervisor

Updates on all manner of projects and initiatives throughout the District.

**Allyson Violante, Director of Government and Community Relations,
Watsonville Community Hospital**

Allyson will bring us good news about great things happening at our community hospital since the public acquisition.

Scott Rohlf, California State Parks Associate Parks and Recreation Specialist

Scott is our local expert on the history, current condition, and plans for local area parks and beaches.

Sergeant Travis Huntsman, Aptos Service Center, County Sheriff Department

Sergeant Huntsman will share updates on safety and enforcement matters for Rio Del Mar and take questions from attendees

The meeting is free to attend and open to all RDMIA residents!

♡ Thanks go out to our new sponsor, Aman at Mountain Mike's Pizza!

Thank you to Robert Graham for bringing cookies to our Fall meeting. ♡

One palm, Two palm, Three palm trees trimmed

(Submitted by Linda Neuman RDMIA Landscaping Chairman)

As you are aware, Rio del Mar Improvement Association (RDMIA) is in the process of making our little community the best it can be. If you have visited the Rio del Mar Esplanade lately, I'm sure you have noticed the three large palm trees that recently received a hair cut (trimming in other words).

The whole project started with a RDMIA member Jeff Whalen's concern with the health of the overgrown palm trees and RDMIA member Joyce Burnett did the leg work and follow-through for the entire project.

There were a couple of bumps along the road i.e. the bids ranged from \$1,000.00 to \$7,000.00 which are rather high for a non-profit to absorb, scheduling issues and uncertainty of ownership of the trees.

Our lifeline in this project was Davey Tree (a local employee-owned company) which provided the labor and equipment free of charge for trimming the palm trees. The only cost the Association incurred was for the debris removal.

The members of RDMIA stepped up to the bat by donating monetarily to cover the \$1,000.00 cost of removing the debris. This kind of collaboration with local businesses is what RDMIA is striving to create.

The tree trimming project is only one item RDMIA has recently completed. There are more projects in the works, so stand by!

Thank you, Davey Tree!

Pictured to the right are Davey crewmates Matt Oliver, Jeremy Nana, & Brandon Barnes.



Esplanade Whaley Sculpture Maintenance Effort and how you can help!

The Rio Del Mar Roundabout features a 14-foot metal sculpture of a seagull in flight known as the Whaley Memorial that commemorates Tom Whaley, who passed away in 1972. Tom was a retired Caltrans highway engineer and dedicated director of the Rio Del Mar Improvement Association until his passing in 1977.

During the development of the Deer Park Shopping Center, plans called for a traffic signal at the intersection of Rio Del Mar Blvd. and Clubhouse. This was neither a popular idea to the community nor a necessary feature for the location but it would have happened if not for Tom's interest and ability to work with the Caltrans and County engineers to devise the four-way stop that we have there now.

Designed in 1976 by Joseph Spencer, the sculpture was originally located on the traffic island at Clubhouse Drive and Rio Del Mar Boulevard, the very center of the project he inspired. Almost 40 years later, the trees grew so large that the sculpture lost its prominence, so it was relocated in 2014 to its current location at the Rio Del Mar Esplanade roundabout.

"A Bird in Flight" is the official name of what we call the Whaley Sculpture and it is a significant public artwork listed by the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution: https://www.si.edu/object/bird-flight-sculpture%3Aasiris_ari_334321

Esplanade Whaley Sculpture Inspection:

We were recently notified by Paul McClure, whose family helped raise the funds needed to relocate the Whaley sculpture, that signs of serious wear were obvious, especially of the bird atop the mast.

The sculpture's curved mast is made of CorTen steel, designed to develop a protective rust finish suitable for outdoor use without additional coatings. We cleaned the plaque and then used a drone to capture video and photos of the top of the sculpture. The bird might be made of a different type of steel, is deteriorating, and needs repairs.

We are investigating ways to restore the sculpture to its original splendor and implement measures to prevent corrosion.



Tom Whaley and his heirs represent the kind of community spirit and personal effort that makes Rio Del Mar so very special. The sculpture honors that spirit but needs your help.

Please Help Restore Esplanade Whaley Sculpture at the Roundabout

The Rio Del Mar Improvement Association needs your help in finding professional services to inspect and diagnose the problem with the steel and provide equipment like a bucket lift to facilitate cleaning, inspection, and eventually treat the metal with protective materials.

We are happy to accept donations for our Whaley Sculpture Restoration Fund and are looking for volunteers to help the Board manage this important effort.

Please contact the board by email: info@rdmia.org

Donations can be sent by US Postal Service to:

RDMIA, P.O. Box 274, Aptos, CA 95001 – 0274.



The Pajaro Valley Health Care District

Submitted by Allyson Violante

Taking care of our health is one of the most important things in life. But for many in our community, getting the care and support they need has not always been easy. The Pajaro Valley Health Care District (PVHCD) was created to ensure everyone has access to quality health care, no matter their background or situation.

What is a Health Care District?

A health care district is a public agency that helps run hospitals and health programs in a specific community. It's a form of local government, overseen by an elected board of directors, similar to a school district or water district. Unlike private hospitals and other health care businesses whose primary focus is making a profit, health care districts prioritize serving the people, making decisions that put patients first.

PVHCD was formed in 2022 to save Watsonville Community Hospital from closing. Had the hospital shut down, tens of thousands of residents would have lost access to emergency care and life-saving treatments. Thanks to state legislative funding and overwhelming community support, including contributions from local residents, businesses, and donors, the necessary funds were raised to bring the hospital under local control after more than 20 years of corporate ownership.

Do You Live in the PVHCD?

Many Rio Del Mar residents live in the newly formed healthcare district. To find out if you live within the boundary of the District, you can use the Santa Cruz County GIS [map](https://sccgis.santacruzcountyca.gov/gisweb/) (<https://sccgis.santacruzcountyca.gov/gisweb/>) and search your address. To turn on the PVHCD layer:

- Open the Legend in the upper left.
- Go down to Special Districts and expand the options by clicking on arrow/triangle.
- Select Pajaro Valley Healthcare District which is the first option by clicking the box

CEO Stephen Gray will be attending the April 16th RDMIA meeting to share more about the District and Watsonville Community Hospital.

Restoration work at Rio del Mar State Beach:

Scott Rohlf – Staff Park and Recreation Specialist

Picture courtesy of Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks



California State Parks has recently made the next step forward on the Rio del Mar Living Shoreline Pilot Project. This project started following substantial storm events in 2021 which caused significant beach and habitat loss and endangered public facilities. California State Parks worked with the local offices of Integral Consulting, Inc., who saw an opportunity to pilot a new approach to protecting public facilities while supporting natural processes.

The design features driftwood, carried to the shore from local rivers during storm events, collected and buried in an interlocking manner beneath the sand. First implemented in 2022, the pilot project has survived the catastrophic swell events of recent winters with further additions to the buried driftwood in 2023 and 2024. Over the last few years, you may have seen us stacking and burying driftwood to support dune growth.

This year, with support from local non-profit Groundswell Coastal Ecology and the Coastal Conservancy funded Monterey Bay Living Shoreline Program, and local volunteers, we've moved forward with replanting native dune vegetation. These plants have evolved to handle local coastal hazards, add stability to dune sand, and aid in the capture of additional sand helping to maintain dune size over time. Additionally, the native plants support native pollinators helping increase local ecosystem health.

Monitoring of the pilot project will be conducted by the Monterey Bay Living Shoreline Program and California State Parks, with technical assistance provided by UC San Diego Scripps Institute of Oceanography. I would like to thank all the volunteers that helped make our recent community planting day a success. If anyone is interested in joining future planting days or would like to help in the maintenance and care of the restoration, please reach out to outreach@groundswellecology.org

Hello to all my friends and neighbors in Rio Del Mar!

Kim De Serpa Second District Supervisor

I'm excited to share an update as I settle into my new role on the Board of Supervisors, having taken office on January 6th. After my first two months, I'm still in the early stages of learning and assessing, and I wanted to give you all a quick snapshot of what's been going on.

During this time, my team and I have been diving into the nuts and bolts of county services, budgets, and all the things that make our community function. My team, Chief of Staff Maureen McCarty and Analyst Gigi Kelbert, have been instrumental as we find our footing. Maureen brings decades of experience, having worked for State Senator Joe Simitian, Assemblymember Mark Stone, and Assemblymember Gail Pellerin. A longtime resident of Aptos, she's thrilled to be part of the team. Gigi, who's run multiple campaigns for me, has a strong background in legal and civic engagement. She's been a resident of Aptos for over 25 years as well, and her knowledge and experience make her a key part of our work. Both are talented, friendly, and excellent problem-solvers. If there's an issue you need help with, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here for you.

A lot of our time is spent at the office on 701 Ocean Street, setting up systems, meeting department leaders, and learning the ins and outs of county services and budget. The changing federal landscape means we may lose some critical funding for services here, which is a concern shared by counties across the nation. We're living in a VUCA world—volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Much like I experienced in 2012 on the school board, I've seen how tough budget challenges can get. Back then, the state budget crisis forced us to make difficult decisions to prevent our district from going into receivership. Though the process was tough, I'm proud of how we rebuilt the school budget and reintroduced vital programs like arts, music, sports, and language as the state economy recovered. I'm determined to approach our county's budget challenges with the same dedication, keeping a close eye on our finances and making tough calls as needed.

My focus is on ensuring fiscal solvency and, above all, the well-being of our community. In my prior life as a clinical social worker, I lived by the motto "Help Starts Here." I approach each situation with a deep understanding of the person in front of me—what their needs are, what challenges they're facing. Without this step, I can't provide effective help. I see my current role as an extension of that work—an ongoing assessment of our community's needs. Over the past 18 months, I've been meeting with many of you to hear your concerns, ideas, and pain points. Now that I'm in office, I'm applying that same mindset to learning how our county government serves us. I've been truly impressed with the county staff, a dedicated, educated, and compassionate group of people who show up every day to serve our



community. Are there areas for improvement? Absolutely, and that's where you and I come in. Thank you to everyone who has already reached out to me with your ideas.

UPCOMING OFFICE HOURS:

Office hours will take place at various locations throughout the district to ensure accessibility for all constituents. No appointments are required, but if you wish to reserve a specific time, please contact our offices. All community members are encouraged to attend.

Upcoming Office Hours:

Thursday, April 24th, 2-4 pm – Corralitos CalFire Station: 120 Eureka Canyon Road, Watsonville, CA

Wednesday May 7th, 3-5 pm – South County Service Center, 790 Green Valley Road, Watsonville, CA

Topics of discussion may include local government services, public safety, housing, infrastructure, and other community concerns. Supervisor De Serpa welcomes input from all constituents and encourages residents to bring their questions and ideas.

For more information or to reserve a specific time at office hours, please contact us at second.district@santacruzcountyca.gov or call us at (831)454-2200.

I'm deeply committed to this work, and I look forward to continuing to learn, grow, and serve our community together.

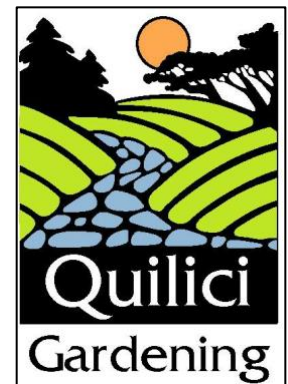
Warmly,

Kim De Serpa

<https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Government/BoardofSupervisors/District2.aspx>

Shout out to Quilici Gardening!

RDMIA wants to wholeheartedly thank Paul Quilici and the crew of Quilici Gardening for doing an amazing job maintaining the island which houses the Rio del Mar entry sign. Thank you to you and your company for donating your time and expertise in keeping our community looking good. Visit their website: <https://www.quilicigardening.com/>



Become a member!

We revised membership options. A Lifetime Membership can now be passed to a non-family member in the same household. Other forms of membership include a Joint Membership that applies to all household members, an Associate Membership for people not living or owning property in the district, and Honorary Memberships bestowed on individuals who have demonstrated exemplary service to the community.

The RDMIA Updated By Laws and Expanded Service Area Map are online:

https://www.rdmia.org/files/ugd/c30a45_8090ede1eee541728581d6b9499f2343.pdf

RDMIA Appreciates New Members and Renewals!

Thank You to those who have already paid their 2025 dues 😊



Current Board members:

- President: Barry Scott
- Vice President elect: Jerry Cannella
- Treasurer: Patricia Perry
- Secretary: Christine DeLapp
- Director: Linda Neuman
- Communications: Joseph Foster

Renewal time is upon us for members to contribute for 2025!

Dues enable RDMIA to maintain area landscapes, improve local parks and engage in community interests.

2025 RDMIA highlights in the community.

- *Whaley Sculpture restoration campaign*
- *Tree trimming for solar lighting enhancement.*
- *Continued landscape care – renovated median landscapes.*
- *Ongoing communication and outreach*



Thank you, Business Sponsors!



Thank you, Aptos Chamber of Commerce & Aptos History Museum!



<http://aptoschamber.com/>



<https://aptoshistory.org/>

Rio Sands HOTEL

100 steps to the beach...

- Spacious king rooms with patios
- 24/7 Guest Services/Business Center
- Year-round heated swimming pool
- Complimentary WiFi and HBO

FREE ON-SITE PARKING

ALLEN PROPERTY GROUP, INC. 116 Aptos Beach Drive | Aptos, CA 95003 | riosands.com | Reservations: 800.826.2077

RDMIA is extending our gratitude to the many sponsors who grace our newsletter with their advertisements. It is a win-win for all. The community learns of our supportive businesses in the area and the community will, hopefully, return the favor by supporting those partners. In the past, it has been customary to ask for a donation from those businesses that advertise in the newsletter.

Sponsors may contribute \$100 per year or a service to the Rio Del Mar Community in the form of landscaping services, raffle prizes, of food and drinks for our members meetings, which includes ad space on our website and in this newsletter.

We look forward to a continued partnership!

**Rio del Mar
Improvement Association**
PO Box 274
Aptos, CA 95001-274

