

Rio del Mar Improvement Association Fall 2020 Newsletter

Fall 2020 RDMIA Newsletter Highlights:

- Members are the Heart of the Association
- Zach Friend, 2nd District Supervisor, Community Updates
- COVID-19 and Fire Resources
- CERT Community Wildfire Response
- Hidden Beach Park Playground and Bathroom Improvements
- RDM Drainage Project Background Report
- Membership Matters



RDMIA is excited to announce the virtual community meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 21st from 6-7pm.

Zach Friend, 2nd District Supervisor along with guest speaker Kent Edler, SC Public Works will provide updates on the RDM Flats drainage projects. Ample time will be allowed for Q & A.

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- **Call-in: 831-454-2222**
 - **Meeting ID: 482188**

In the meantime, please read Mr. Edler's background report on page 9.

We hope you will dial in for this discussion.

Annual Membership Renewal and Information Update

www.rdmia.org

Fall 2020 Newsletter



The Rio del Mar Improvement Association annual membership per household is \$30 by check or \$32 by PayPal (includes \$2 PayPal fee). A \$500 lifetime membership is also offered.

Ways To Join

- Complete membership form online at www.rdmia.org and pay via PayPal (\$30 + \$2 = \$32)
- Complete membership form online at www.rdmia.org and mail check payable to RDMIA (\$30)
- Print out membership form, complete along with check payable to RDMIA (\$30) and mail

Please mail to **RDMIA, P.O. Box 274, Aptos, CA 95001-0274** along with your payment. Your contact information is used solely for newsletter and RDMIA communications, and is not shared with any other member or 3rd party.

Membership Information

Please print legibly – thank you

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Rio del Mar Address (if different) _____

Primary Email _____ Secondary Email _____

Telephone number _____ I have no computer access

____ New Member ____ Renewing Member Referred by _____

Please send the RDMIA Newsletter by email to save printing/ mailing costs Yes ____ No ____

Get Involved?

____ I want to volunteer or contribute (time, \$, or in-kind) for RDMIA projects. Please call or email me

____ I am interested in becoming a RDMIA Board member

What do you value most about RDMIA? (check all that apply)

Community Outreach

____ RDMIA newsletter membership ____ General membership semi-annual meetings

____ RDMIA website ____ Presenting interesting speakers

Community Advocacy

____ Interfacing with local government ____ Updating RDMIA Facebook

____ Information concerning local issues such as transportation/roads

Beautification

____ Public area landscape improvements and maintenance

____ Helping to maintain our beaches

RDMIA Members are the Heart of the Association

Your membership matters! Renewal time for members to contribute for 2021 is here. RDMIA is most grateful for our neighbors and friends who continue to support RDMIA's community interests. Dues enable RDMIA to maintain area landscapes, improve local parks and engage in community interests. To learn more about 2020 accomplishments visit rdmia.org.



Ways to Join or Renew:

Complete [online membership form](#) and pay via PayPal (\$30 + \$2 = \$32) using Donate button

Complete [online membership form](#) and mail check payable to RDMIA (\$30)

[Print out membership form](#) and complete along with check payable to RDMIA (\$30) and mail

Forms and fees should be mailed to
RDMIA, P.O. Box 274, Aptos, CA 95001 – 0274.

Enhancing our neighborhoods through beautification, advocacy and engagement



RDMIA continues the work of maintaining landscapes throughout Rio del Mar
[Learn more](#)



RDMIA hosts community public meetings during the year with local officials sharing current events and news to keep you informed.
[Learn more](#)



RDMIA volunteers continue to dedicate time and engagement to Save Our Shores beach clean-ups, Hidden Beach Park improvements, and our neighborhoods. [Learn more](#)

Community Updates from Zach Friend

2nd District County Supervisor



RVs Parking in the Rio Flats

Over the last year, my office has received calls regarding RVs parking overnight near the Esplanade and in particular along Moosehead. The number of these vehicles has increased in the last two months and residents want to know why the RVs are allowed to park overnight. Here are some answers to the most common questions we've been receiving.

Is it illegal to park overnight?

Under state law, a vehicle can park for up to 72 hours on a public street. After 72 hours vehicles are required to move. While the County has historically had a no overnight camping regulation (that would prohibit living in your RV overnight) the State shelter-in-place order altered enforcement abilities on this front (and supersedes any local ordinance). Specifically, during the state order (which is still in effect) local authorities are not allowed to "evict" people living in vehicles in order to ensure (as there has been an increase in the number of people seeking shelter in RVs or vehicles during the economic downturn and COVID more broadly) there aren't increases in unsheltered homeless in the state. So if a vehicle is being used for shelter purposes, the ability to enforce traditional regulations has been modified. These vehicles are still required to move every 72 hours or they can be cited. Some of these RVs move every few days around the area to restart the clock and prevent enforcement.

If the RVs are parked for a long time shouldn't they be towed?

Not all of the RVs that are parked are being used for sheltering purposes and some are just stored on the public right-of-way. The Sheriff's Office, led by Sgt. Jordan Brownlee in Aptos, has taken a lead on citing and, when possible, towing these RVs. In the case of the most common collection on Moosehead, these RVs have been repeatedly cited (in fact, about 90 times), some have been towed (and then purchased back out of impound) or even replaced by one of the owners (who happens to own a few of the RVs and vehicles). A number of them (belonging to the same owner) were towed the week of September 21st and it's anticipated that some of those won't return.

A significant challenge of towing these RVs rests with the tow companies themselves. Tow companies, understandably, have become reluctant to tow RVs (not just locally but across the state). A global collapse of the scrap market has decreased the value for these companies (especially if the RV isn't removed by the owner). Additionally, many of them have human waste or other clean-up costs that add to the cost of towing and storage costs have increased for some tow companies. Recently, the only tow company that was willing to tow one of the RVs was based in Oakland - and while local companies have been great partners with law enforcement on dealing with problematic vehicles, it's understandable that they don't want to take a financial risk on towing the RVs. The Sheriff's Office has been looking at ways to help subsidize the funding to make it less of a risk and that process is on going.

Why are you citing RVs that are fire evacuees?

This question recently came into my office from a Rio Del Mar resident concerned that the Sheriff's Office was citing fire evacuees that were living in their RVs. While we couldn't find any verification that such citations were given, the 72 hour rule of parking on a public street still applies. But importantly, in the case of fire evacuees most people have been allowed to return home and for those that remain the County has provided facilities for RVs and even State Parks is working to allow people at Seacliff and elsewhere. Overall, parking on a County road isn't the best place for someone. There's no connection to services, it will invariably lead to neighborhood concerns and is still against state law to do it for more than 72 hours. The County has RV parking locations and have partnered with the Red Cross to provide facilities and services for people in RVs such as showers, water, hotel vouchers, food, connection to insurance contacts, Small Business Association and FEMA contacts and much more - none of which would exist on a County road in Rio Del Mar. In this case we would encourage anyone that needs their RV as part of the fire evacuation to work with the new County Recovery Center at the Kaiser Permanente Arena downtown for access to these essential services.

Can Permit Parking be Created?

Permit parking in the neighborhoods, or metered parking on the Esplanade, would require the creation of a new parking district (funded by the permits - which would also provide for enforcement) and would require the support of the Coastal Commission. Metered parking would also follow a similar process. If the community is interested in pursuing one or both of these options (which would take some time to enact) the Association could reach out. A first step might be meeting with Coastal Commission staff to see if there would be support for the process.

As always, I appreciate any feedback you may have on this (or any other County issue).

I'm maintaining regular updates on social media at www.facebook.com/supervisorfriend and I'm hosting tele-townhalls with County, State and community leaders on most Tuesday evenings. If you want to connect on anything else, you can always call me at 454-2200.

Supervisor Friend's Tuesday Telecom Townhalls

The telecom town halls are all equally insightful and always provide up to date information and resources. Each discussion continues to educate the community as we navigate and cooperate for our collective safety.

- Tuesday Townhalls 6-7pm
- 831-454-2222 Meeting ID: 145384#

Callers are welcome to speak about any issue during the town halls or you can call Zach at 831.454.2200.

Thank you Zach and to all your speakers for facilitating these important discussions. If you have not been able to join in, recordings are available by reaching out to Supervisor Friend's office at 831.454.2200 or email at zach.friend@santacruzcounty.us.

Audio from these townhalls since the last townhalls in the Summer newsletter are available :

- COVID-19 Update with Santa Cruz Public Libraries Director Susan Nemitz
- SC County Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel COVID 19 Update
- Assemblymember Mark Stone COVID 19 & State Budget Update

- Dr. Robert Wachter, Professor and Chair of UCSF Department of Medicine COVID 19 State and Nation Efforts Discussion
- Congressman Jimmy Panetta discussion on COVID-19 Federal Response & Fire Update
- State Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara discussion on Essential Insurance Resources
- Dr. Maria Elena Bottazzi, Internationally Recognized Vaccine Development Leader
- Dr. Michelle Rodriguez, Pajaro Valley Unified School District Superintendent
- Lt. Governor Kounalakis with Senator Monning
- UCSC Chancellor Cynthia Larive COVID-19 Discussion
- SC County Public Health Officer Gail Newel

COVID -19 and Fire Resources

There are many ways we can help our neighbors during this incredibly challenging time. Following is a list of some of the local resources available to help our community heal and persevere. Please do what you can safely and contact my office if you have questions or concerns at 831-454-2200 or email: zach.friend@santacruzcounty.us



COVID

- Community Foundation Santa Cruz County Response Fund <https://www.cfsc.org/funds/covid-19-local-response-fund>
- Sign Up for weekly grocery delivery from Grey Bears <https://www.greybears.org/groceries/>
- Salud Para la Gente <https://splg.org/donate/>
- Second Harvest Food Bank <https://www.thefoodbank.org/>
- Santa Cruz Volunteer Center COVID 19 Information <https://scvolunteercenter.org/about-us/covid-19-safety-and-opening-schedule/>

CZU Lightning Fires

- Community Foundation Fire Response Fund <https://www.cfsc.org/updates/fire-response-fund>
- Community Action Board <https://cabinc.org/2020/04/17/cab-covid-19-fire-emergency-response-needs-funds/>
- Grey Bears Fire Program <https://www.greybears.org/grey-bears-news/>
- Second Harvest Food Bank <https://www.thefoodbank.org/>
- Register Fire Response Volunteer <https://scvolunteercenter.org/events-2/register-volunteer-fire-response/>
- Donate to Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County <https://scvolunteercenter.org/sustain-our-efforts/>
- Have family/friends that need access to fire resources? <http://santacruzcounty.us/FireResources.aspx>
- Want to prepare your own home? <https://www.readyforwildfire.org>



Lightning Complex fires carry costly reminder...CERT Community Support Efforts



There is a good chance that most of you personally know more people who were directly impacted by the recent coastal wildfires—loss of property... pets or livestock... or access to homes—than those impacted by COVID-19. And even if you were not among our less fortunate neighbors, all of us suffered from indirect impacts of the fire... from poor air quality and road closures to the astronomical costs that may well affect our economy for years to come.

The CZU Lightning Complex fire is yet another in a chain of reminders that we live in a county that purportedly has more geological hazards per square mile than any other in the State of California.

What you might not know is that our immediate Rio Flats area currently has fifteen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trained members (including two who are ham radio operators). And several of these very same neighbors of yours served stints of duty when CERT was activated in response to the CZU fire—first at the evacuation center that was established at the County Fairgrounds in Watsonville and later at the Fire Resource Recovery Center established at Kaiser Permanente Stadium (Warriors Arena) on Front Street in Santa Cruz.



We were lucky in our Rio Del Mar neighborhoods this time around. But given the odds that something COULD happen in our idyllic area the next time around, there are two questions that each of us should probably be considering:

- 1) Am I prepared to “go it alone” and sustain myself, my family, and the pets in my house for an extended period of time? And,
- 2) Once I have determined that things are “OK” in my house, do I have the training, equipment, and organizational support to help some of my less fortunate neighbors in the immediate aftermath of a major disaster.

This is where the **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** concept comes in. CERT provides both the training and the organizational support to help individuals prepare for, and respond to anticipated disruptions and potential hazards following a disaster.

CERT neighbor captains are hard at work in the Rio del Mar Flats. Recently the teams acquired MURS hand-held radios assigned to captains who conduct monthly radio checks and recruited local licensed ham radio operators to maintain lines of communication with the outside world should the need arise.

The teams are seeking additional captains for six of the twelve designated “neighborhoods.” Consider participating in a future meeting and taking the **free CERT Aptos training course** at www.santacruzcountycert.org or contact any of the neighborhood captains below for more details:

Lori Nielsen lorinielsen2000@yahoo.com
Eve Majure evemajure@earthlink.net
Rob & Dondi Gaskill beachnit@pacbell.net

Jerry Canella jerry@aljers.com
Chuck Melton chasmelton@hotmail.com
Tim Barroca timbarroca@msn.com

Hidden Beach Park Playground and Bathroom Improvements

Building a healthy future together

It's not too late to see your (or your business') name on the Hidden Beach Donor Playground Plaque



The Basics:

- We are all blown away by the DeBernardo Team and our community's support for this project, in honor of Jett Ramsey and despite the pandemic.
- Together, we've raised approximately \$40,000, leaving us with a goal of \$20,000 to go.
- This final \$20,000 will ensure that the entire playground has [rubberized \(click for examples\) surfacing](#), **making it fully accessible for all.**
- All donors of \$1000 and above will be thanked in a permanent donor plaque at the site. [Find your Name HERE.](#) **RDMIA appreciates member support that helped donate \$1,000 to this worthy cause.**

Donate for our future at <https://www.countyparkfriends.org/hiddenbeachplayground.html> today. All donations are tax deductible. Checks can be mailed to: County Park Friends, subj line: Hidden Beach Playground: at 870 17th Ave STE 2 Santa Cruz, CA 95062.



Hidden Beach County Park Update

By County Parks staff

Hidden Beach County Park will undergo exciting upgrades in the next few years, including installation of a permanent restroom and replacement of the existing play structure.

Permanent Restroom:

On September 3, 2020, the state Coastal Conservancy Board of Directors awarded funds for pre-construction planning and permitting work. Subsequently, Parks staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to local engineering firms to produce a conceptual plan, host a public meeting for community input, and submit for County permits, including state environmental review. Parks staff will review responses to the RFP in November and will begin the process of hiring a consultant and developing a project schedule. Once the County selects a design consultant, completes the internal contract approval process, and finalizes a schedule, we will have a better idea of when a public meeting to gather community input may occur; however, we anticipate hosting a public meeting in Winter 2020 or early Spring 2021. Ideally, a meeting could be held at the park to comply with social distancing requirements but if the weather is uncooperative, we may need to find an indoor space where attendees can spread out.

Play Structure Replacement:

Based on input received from the community about play structure replacement elements via Supervisor Friend's office, County Park Friends, Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, and other opportunities, Parks staff contacted several play structure manufacturers for proposals. The Department recently received proposals from Kompan, SPEC, and Landscape Structure, Inc. (LSI), and we are in the process of reviewing the proposals internally to determine how well each proposal responds to the community input. The public input period has concluded, and Parks staff does not anticipate additional community input opportunities as valuable information was previously gathered.

Commemorative Program

Hidden Beach County Park is enriched by several commemorative benches and trees. Members may be interested in learning more information about the Commemorative Program at Hidden Beach or another county park by visiting the Parks website <http://www.scparks.com/>

RDM Flats Drainage Project

Background report from Kent Edler, Assistant Director, SC Public Works



RDMIA Virtual Meeting Details:

- **Wednesday, October 21st 6-7pm**
- **Call-in: 831-454-2222**
- **Meeting ID: 482188**

During the rainy season, the Rio Del Mar esplanade area often sees flooding of roads and properties. This is due to the area being developed on a historic floodplain and due to the drainage system not being able to drain to Aptos Creek when the river levels are high.

County Public Works staff have been studying the area for many years to come up with a solution. In 2014, Public Works was awarded a grant from FEMA for approximately \$617,000 to further study and design a solution to help with some of the flooding issues. The design includes new drainage pipes and inlets in parts of Aptos Beach Drive, Venetian Road, Rio Del Mar Boulevard and Beach Drive which will be directed to a new pump station located on the triangular piece of land across Venetian Road from Bailey Properties and the Pixie Deli. From the pump station the storm water will be sent to infiltration pits located on the beach, approximately 50 to 100 feet east of the beach bathrooms.

If built, the project will obviously reduce flooding and associated claims of flood damaged properties, but there are additional benefits. One added benefit is an improvement to evacuation access and emergency response during flooding events. Additionally, direction of stormwater to the pump station and away from Aptos Creek will reduce pollution discharges to the impounded creek channel where fish habitat and water quality are a concern.

The estimated construction cost for the project is \$4,802,704, and this summer Public Works received \$4,204,588 in grant funding from three agencies to help pay for the project:

- \$3,596,238 from FEMA
- \$8,446 from Cal OES
- \$599,904 from the California Department of Water Resources through an Integrated Regional Water Management program.
- The remaining “matching funds” will come from drainage impact fees the County has on hand.

The grants come with deadlines, so the project will need to be completed by April 2, 2023. Public Works is planning to get the project documents wrapped up by early 2021 in order to get the project advertised for bids. Award of the contract is expected for Spring 2021, with construction starting shortly thereafter. Total construction time is expected to take six to seven months.

Once the project is constructed, the pumps and infiltration pits will require annual maintenance which is currently estimated at approximately \$125,000 per year. Currently, there is not a funding source for the ongoing maintenance and it doesn't make sense to build a project that can't be maintained. So Public Works staff are in the process working up scenarios to propose to residents in the affected area to fund the ongoing maintenance through the formation of a County Service Area (CSA). The formation of the CSA would need to be compliant with Proposition 218, which requires the assessment to coincide with those receiving direct benefits.

Therefore, areas that do not benefit from flood reduction will need to be excluded from any new assessment.

The assessments are being discussed with Supervisor Friend's office and will be reviewed in further detail at a virtual meeting with residents on October 21st.

RDMIA Appreciates New Members and Renewals



Welcome to our new members and thank you for joining!

John & Margie Biddick
Patricia Perry

Paul & June Peterson

Current Board members:

- President: Dan Rothenbush president@rdmia.org
- Vice Pres: Jerry Canella vicepresident@rdmia.org
- Treasurer: Sam Nazzal treasurer@rdmia.org
- Secretary: **open** secretary@rdmia.org
- Director: Donna Townsend info@rdmia.org
- Director: Peter Townsend website@rdmia.org
- Director: open



We continue to seek those members who might be interested in volunteering and sharing your expertise on the Board. Please contact the Board at info@rdmia.org or email Director above.

Your membership matters!. Renewal time for members to contribute for 2021 is now. RDMIA is most grateful for our neighbors and friends who continue to support RDMIA's community interests.

Dues enable RDMIA to maintain area landscapes, improve local parks and engage in community interests. 2020 RDMIA highlights in the community:

- ***Improved solar lighting***
- ***Tree trimming for solar lighting enhancement***
- ***Continued landscape care – renovated median landscapes***
- ***Donation towards Hidden Beach Park playground Jett Ramsey Tribute***
- ***Sgt. Damon Gutzwiller Heroes Fallen Fund***
- ***Ongoing communication outreach***

Ways to Join or Renew:

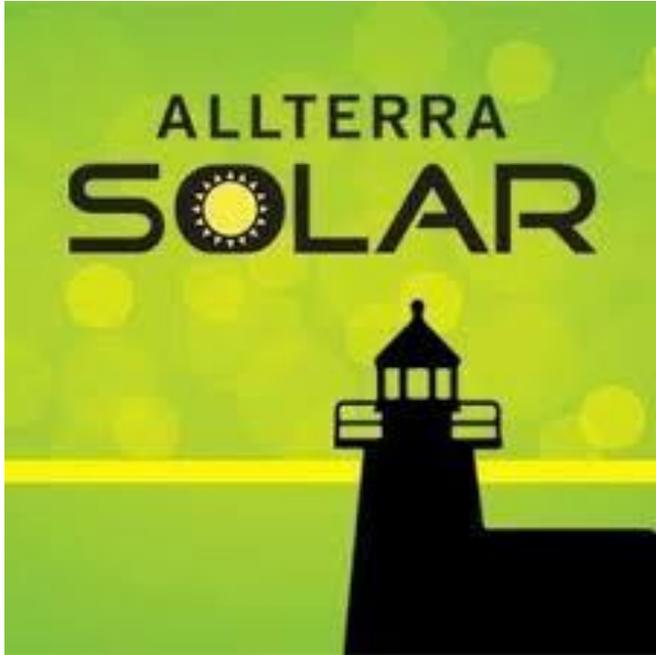
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