
RIO DEL MAR

Improvement Association

Spring 2024 Newsletter



RDMIA Semi-Annual Spring Meeting:
Rio Sands Hotel Meeting Room
Wednesday, April 17th, 2024, at 6:30 PM

REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW FOR 2024
The annual Membership Fee is \$30 (Use the enclosed form or pay online)

Spring 2024 RDMIA Newsletter Highlights:

- “Thank You, County Public Works” by Patricia Perry, RDMIA Treasurer
- Rio Del Mar News Archives discovered at the Aptos History Museum!
- In the News: The Beach Drive Walkway and those new fences.
- Prevent Storm Damage to Your Homes” by Christine DeLapp, RDMIA Secretary



Spring Newsletter

The Semi-Annual meeting of the RDMIA will be held on

Wednesday, April 17th

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

Speakers will include:

Sergeant Zach West, Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department

Zach will be on hand to update members on matters under their watch and take questions that address your concerns.

Fire Marshal Mike DeMars, Santa Cruz Central Fire District

Fire Marshal DeMars will provide updates relating to fire prevention and safety measures every household should understand and implement.

Dan Haifley and Mariah Roberts, Santa Cruz Friends of County Parks

Dan and Mariah will provide updates about Hidden Beach improvements and tell attendees about an exciting new project at Jade Street Park.

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

Snacks and refreshments will be provided courtesy of Mangiamo Pizza!

Thank You, Santa Cruz County Community Development, and Infrastructure (formerly County Public Works)

This past winter, specifically on December 28th, was a time to COMPLIMENT our Santa Cruz County Roads and Drainage crew managed by Alex Sandoval [Superintendent – Roads, Drainage, Fleet Community Development, and Infrastructure – Public Works]

RDMIA Board Member Patricia was happy to thank the crew via email for: “your exemplary effort during the high tide on Dec. 28, 2023 for Aptos Beach drive and surrounding area.”



I have told everyone who has asked and even those who did not ask that: Santa Cruz County was performing and is still performing above our expectations! I was watching the activities at the end of Aptos Beach Drive by the ocean at high tide on Thursday, December 28; and even before the water had stopped flowing over the walls Santa Cruz County staff was out cleaning up the area which they continued to do on Friday, Dec 29 and it is still ongoing even today. Thank you! I really appreciate you keeping us safe and clearing our roads and drainage - it means everything to us here in the flats.

The following days of rain after Dec 28th because of your hard work ‘cleaning everything up’ you kept our area draining and free of standing water.

... I really do appreciate your help for many reasons but also because we live here full-time, and a lot of the units/homes are empty/ 2nd homes-vacation rentals we are without a lot of neighbors around to help us out & the property management companies don’t come out to help when the need is immediate. We full-time homeowners need you and appreciate you.

- Submitted by RDMIA Secretary Patricia Perry

Rio Del Mar Improvement Association Newsletter Archive Discovered!

The Aptos Chamber and History Museum gave us boxes of past newsletters last month.

We LOVE what Ed Vautier wrote in the 1970 issue below: *"I can't think of a better insurance than \$1.00 per month dues to insure that the Association keeps up the good work; and more importantly your membership proves to volunteers and directors that you care enough to support their efforts – it indicates your appreciation and encourages them to work harder."*

Rio del Mar News

PUBLISHED BY RIO DEL MAR IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

VOLUME VII FIRST QUARTER 1970 NUMBER 21

Let's look at the bright side

As reported elsewhere in this issue, the Aptos Seascape rezoning application to permit construction of a lodge on the golf course in the grove of trees on the west side of the 18th fairway has been approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Association directors are unanimously in accord that the four supervisors who voted for the project were not "acting irresponsibly or with improper motives or incentives" as charged by some opponents to the plan. Each, in the opinion of Association observers, vot-

PERSONAL FROM ED VAUTIER TO ALL RIO OWNERS

I accepted the appointment as Association Membership chairman as a token of my appreciation of the work the organization has done during its 29 years of existence.

Quite frankly, without the Association I do not believe I would be here, and I doubt if you would be either. In my extensive travels I have learned that communities do not grow beautiful and remain valuable without some vigorous, respected and vigilant group's constant effort over a long period of years.

The evidence is all around us! Why do some developments deteriorate and others appreciate? The only difference between Rio and its neighbors is the Association. We share the same terrain, the same climate, the same sewer system and often the same age. But we chose Rio del Mar where history has proven that our investments are safer.

I can't think of a better insurance than \$1.00 per month dues to insure that the Association keeps up the good work; and, more importantly your membership proves to volunteers and directors that you care enough to support their efforts -- it indicates your appreciation and encourages them to work harder.

Save the little wild places

by Vernon Baird

In a recent speech, Congressman John Dingell, Michigan, mentioned that while conservationists worry about saving the Grand Canyon, redwoods and Everglades, the little wild places are slipping away. Major battles have been fought over large, awe inspiring, wild places such as the Grand Canyon and Point Reyes Seashore while little local open space has been slipping away.

"What are these little wild places? They are the three acres next to the high school ... the field behind the sewage plant ... the creek that flows through town ... the vacant lot next door ... these are the pre-

Rio del Mar News

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VOLUME VII FOURTH QUARTER 1969

Supplemental Assessments reduced a bit.

After months of controversy, negotiations, investigations, and some compromise, the County Planning Department has announced a 15 per cent reduction in supplemental assessments on properties with improvements in 1969.

The Board of Supervisors, after a hearing on November 12, 1969, voted to approve the reduction.

Season's Greetings FROM THE STAFF OF RIO DEL MAR NEWS

WE WISH YOU...

- Enough HAPPINESS to keep you JOYFUL;
- Enough TRIALS to keep you STRONG;
- Enough SORROW to keep you HUMAN;
- Enough HOPE to keep you HAPPY;
- Enough FAILURE to keep you HUMBLE;
- Enough SUCCESS to keep you EAGER.

Association loses friend "at court"

After months of controversy, negotiations, investigations, and some compromise, the County Planning Department has announced a 15 per cent reduction in supplemental assessments on properties with improvements in 1969.

Member's News Letter

RIO DEL MAR IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 24
APTOS, CALIFORNIA 95001-0024

October 1969 John Richards, Editor

Annual Meeting — October 14

Thanks Guys and Gals — You're Great

by John Richards

In this last year as board member and president, I want to personally thank those people who have made the last two years pleasant and profitable in their association and service to the association. Some thanks to RICH HANSEN, who has kept the association moving forward, and to the board members who have worked long and hard to keep the association moving forward.

And don't say that you can't attend because that just isn't your style. The ones who are playing that are the ones who will be over 100.

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Issues of Interest on the November Ballot

Two items of interest to Rio del Mar residents will appear on the November Ballot. The first is the proposed 15 cent sales tax increase for the Santa Cruz County. The other is the proposed 15 cent sales tax increase for the Santa Cruz County. The first is the proposed 15 cent sales tax increase for the Santa Cruz County. The other is the proposed 15 cent sales tax increase for the Santa Cruz County.

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VOLUME VII FOURTH QUARTER 1969

Annual Committee report on beautification projects in Rio

By Mrs. Corlyle Miller

ESPLANADE TREES BEACH PLANTER

There was the problem of selecting and planting trees and shrubs along the esplanade. The committee has selected a variety of trees and shrubs to be planted along the esplanade.

Seascape wants to build 100-unit motel in Rio

Apartment complex, Seascape, has announced plans to build a 100-unit motel in Rio del Mar. The motel is to be built on the site of the old hotel.

Overhaul of Rio Blvd. in new county budget

The Rio del Mar Improvement Association has announced plans to overhaul Rio Blvd. in the new county budget.

Thanks to the Aptos History Museum for keeping decades of our newsletters!

Help Wanted!

We are looking for volunteers willing to help us catalog and scan those historic paper copies before they turn to dust. Please send an email to us at info@rdmia.org if interested!

Rio Del Mar Makes International News Headlines!

In case you haven't heard, the walkway along the "Beach Drive Island" is in the news!

The Times of London: ["Life isn't a beach in California town divided over public walkway"](#)

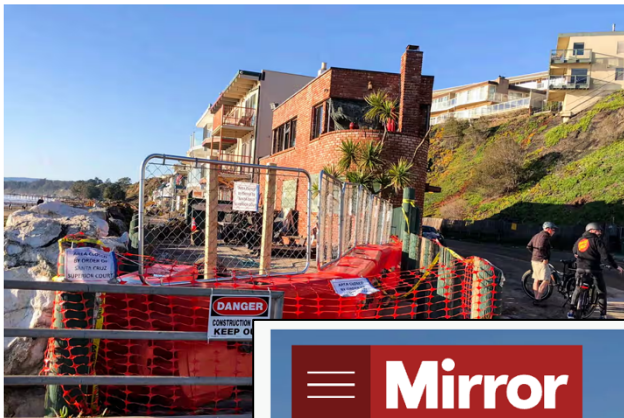
The UK Mirror: [Luxury neighbourhood residents fined \\$4.7m after barriers block public beach](#)

The Guardian: [California homeowners raise stakes – and a fence – in beach access battle](#)

New York Post: [Wealthy California HOA erects fence blocking beach access](#)

California homeowners raise stakes – and a fence – in beach access battle

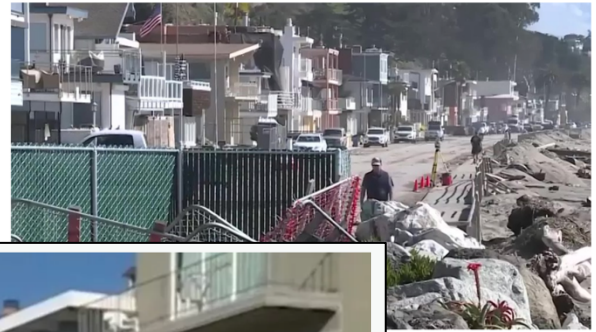
Feud with coastal commission goes back almost 45 years, with HOA blowing off \$4.7m fine and drawing line in sand - a chain-link fence



The contested area along Beach Drive California coastal commission

Life isn't a beach in California town divided over public walkway

Homeowners in Aptos are refusing to pull down fences that restrict access to the coast despite being hit by a \$4.7 million fine



ely their backyard so they have a

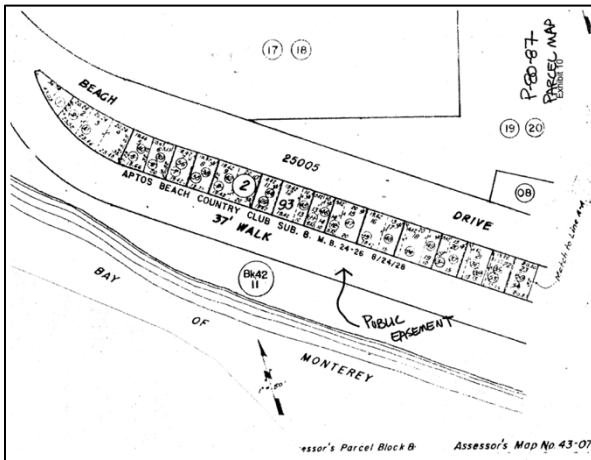


Florida homeowners are being fined £4million for erecting a barrier to block a public beach pathway (Image: KSBW 8)

The Cliffs Notes version of what's happening goes like this:

The 27 structures between 202 and 300 Beach Drive are generally built covering 100% of each parcel, with a 37-foot county-owned public walkway on the ocean side and a sidewalk and street on the inland side. The most recent home to be built at 202 Beach Drive conformed with the 1972 Coastal Act and provided public access to the walkway through the carport. A fence at the other end at 300 Beach Drive had a gate that remained closed and locked.

In February of 1980, a “whopping high tide sea storm wrecked the 50-year-old timber sea wall” along Beach Drive, taking with it the seaward half of the walkway.



As part of the required permit to rebuild the walkway and install a rock revetment (present today), the HOA agreed to continue to allow public access and care for the rock wall and vegetation following specific guidelines. According to the permit “the public shall have the right to use a walkway”.

Over time, the Coastal Commission was working to restore public access and in December of 2018 walls at each end of the walkway were removed by the County. During the January 2023 storms, emergency barriers were installed at each end but remained through the end of the year and into 2024. The Coastal Commission sent a letter of warning to the responsible parties, and ultimately levied the largest-ever fines. Owners took the fence removal to the Superior Court which found in their favor, but appeals are underway and it gets complicated.

RDMIA members are encouraged to read the Coastal Commission’s notice here:

<https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2023/12/Th9.1-Th9.5/Th9.1-Th9.5-11-30-2023-report.pdf>



Above: Unpermitted chain link fences at each end of the Beach Drive Island Walkway today

Local Coverage provides further detail here:

Lookout: <https://lookout.co/on-the-fence-what-homeowners-renters-and-neighbors-are-saying-about-rio-del-mar-hoas-new-coastal-barrier/>

Sentinel: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2024/03/12/editorial-rio-del-mar-walkway-battle-to-the-barricades/>

<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2024/02/21/rio-del-mar-homeowners-prop-up-fence-amid-access-battles/>

Tree safety: How to prevent damage to your home caused by storms.

The Rio Del Mar neighborhood was again visited by the wrath of Mother Nature. High winds, relentless rain, and high tides caused flooding, the creek spewing more and more debris on our beaches, many fallen trees and power outages. Over the years, as we have been pummeled by damaging storms, our neighbors have learned to prepare for challenges from our weather working tirelessly to prepare for recent and future storms. The drainage has improved to minimize flooding, people are using a variety of means from generators to their car batteries to keep power on during outages. State and county workers work tirelessly to clear the debris to enable our community to return to normal.

The many storms, though, have resulted in power outages lasting several days. In our community the worst culprits were trees falling on power lines, wiping out electricity for the Rio Del Mar area. PGE, so inundated with needs, couldn't even get to our area in a timely manner. Twice a tree has fallen at the top of Aptos Beach Drive causing widespread outages and closing the road as well. It isn't just loss of power it is also the danger falling trees can cause. So it is time to take a critical look at the trees in our area. Just as so many have prepared for the storms in several ways we can take preventive action to try to minimize the number of trees that fall. Owners should survey and try to determine possible problems. Many tree specialists in the area can help. A few dollars of prevention can help prevent the misery of power loss and potential danger to people and property. There are many parts of our home we check regularly to ensure they continue to function appropriately. Now is the time to do the same for our trees.

- Submitted by RDMIA Secretary Christine DeLapp

RDMIA Appreciates New Members and Renewals!



Thank You to those who have already paid their 2024 dues 😊

Current Board members:

- President: Dan Rothenbush
- Vice Pres/ Membership: Jerry Cannella
- Treasurer: Patricia Perry
- Secretary: Christina DeLapp
- Website / Social Media: Barry Scott
- Communications: Joseph Foster
- Director: Linda Neuman

Renewal time is upon us for members to contribute for 2024!

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

2024 RDMIA highlights in the community.

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



Thank you, Business Sponsors!



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



<http://aptoschamber.com/>



<https://aptoshistory.org/>

Rio Sands HOTEL

FREE ON-SITE PARKING

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

100 steps to the beach...

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.

During Covid, we waived sponsor fees as a showing of support as we knew that all businesses were impacted. As we return to a more traditional model with costs associated with meetings and the work we do in the community, we are reinstating the sponsor fees of \$100 per year, 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



Annual Membership: \$30

Please complete this form and 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.

RDMIA annual membership per household is \$30 by check or \$32 by PayPal (including \$2 PayPal fee).

A \$500 Lifetime "LEGACY MEMBERSHIP" is eternal: membership can be passed to a resident family member!

Ways To Join:

- Complete membership form online at www.rdmia.org and pay via PayPal (\$30 + \$2 = \$32)
- Complete the membership form online at www.rdmia.org and mail a check payable to RDMIA (\$30)
- Print and complete this membership form and mail it to RDMIA, P.O. Box 274, Aptos, CA 95001-0274.

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.

☐ Please Email my newsletter to save printing and postage

☐ New Member ☐ Renewing Member Referred by _____

Get Involved?

☐ I want to volunteer or contribute time or funding for RDMIA projects. Please call or email me.

☐ I am interested in becoming a RDMIA Board member.

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

Community Outreach

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> RDMIA newsletter membership | <input type="checkbox"/> General membership semi-annual meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RDMIA website | <input type="checkbox"/> Presenting interesting speakers |

Community Advocacy

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interfacing with local government | <input type="checkbox"/> Updating RDMIA Facebook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information concerning local issues such as transportation, water, and community events. | |

Beautification

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public area landscape improvements and maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping to maintain our beaches |

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

