

Rio Del Mar

IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Fall/Winter 2010/2011 Newsletter

The Esplanade Renaissance Has Begun!

Fourteen New Palm Trees on the Esplanade

The new palm trees planted at the Esplanade are the result of the interest, passion, donations, and the efforts of many people.

The dead palm, removed in August of 2009, and its replacement initiated Peter Prillinger's interest and also drew the attention of Bob Sanchez. They researched palms and interfaced with various nurseries concerning the next steps. County Public Works removed the dead palm



because it became a hazard to the public. The picture above shows the Esplanade palms after the dead palm was removed, but before the new palms were planted.

Les White did much of the "leg work" in smoothing the way to understand "who was responsible for what" in the Esplanade and was able to work with State Parks and County Public Works on those issues. Bill Weseloh went to his neighbors on Beach Drive for two separate tree plantings: four on the first, and 10 on the second. Bill

gathered over \$3,000 in donations to purchase the 14 trees Pat Kelley obtained the trees at cost, worked with Anita Heath and with Les White, State Parks, and County Public Works to organize the planting operation. Peter Prillinger coordinated with Steve Wiesner (Public Works) to meet their requirements and with Auggie Ceballos and Kevin Best (State Parks). He also asked Doug Serada of Anderson Pacific (contractor for the sewer line upgrade) to determine that the intended



locations for holes for planting were clear of utilities. In addition to making that determination, Anderson Pacific provided a back-hoe to dig some of the planting holes for the initial planting

A host of other volunteers who have contributed their time in support of this and past efforts to improve the Esplanade and its facilities include Bob Sanchez, Caroline Kelley, Anthony McMahon, and Jeffery Long

who helped to complete this phase of planting. Both Kirk Lingenfelter and Auggie Ceballos of State Parks have been particularly supportive of this and past efforts to improve the Esplanade and its facilities.



Until a more permanent irrigation system can be installed, Paul Mengum has volunteered to help with regular watering of the palms.

This is the first phase of additional improvements Rio del Mar Improvement Association is planning for the Esplanade, in cooperation with State Parks and Public Works, at the conclusion of the sewer line upgrade which include:

- Replacing the current traffic circle with an improved design
- Resurfacing and restriping the parking lot
- Improving the landscaping in the strip (Bob Sanchez has developed a proposed plan which is being reviewed) under the palm trees and in the traffic circle
- Regular maintenance



Round-about and resurface of parking lot

The sewer realignment project will be completed in September of this year. The new round-about for which RDMIA have been working and lobbying since 2003, will become a reality. This will occur as part of the paving/slurring of the affected area, once all of the equipment and material have been removed from the Esplanade.

Rio Sands Renovation

The Rio Sands Motel, owned by Mr. Lou Bartfield, will be remodeled before summer. The Rio Sands Motel is located about a block from Rio Del Mar Beach, very near the Esplanade. The 50-room motel has been an historical and complementary part of Rio del Mar community for more than 50 years. Mr. Bartfield has been very supportive of the community and of RDMIA—providing us their conference room for our general membership meetings as well as meetings to inform our community on topics of interest, such as the sewer realignment project.



New Rio Café ownership and new restaurateur

The new owner of the Rio Café is said to have some great plans for the property. There have been lots of competing rumors as to what those plans are—but none have yet been confirmed.

Sculpture Revealed

RDMIA has been trying for some time to determine how best to improve the visibility of the Whaley monument. The monument is a beautiful steel sculpture on the large island in front of Deer Park on Rio del Mar Boulevard. The sculpture had been increasingly hidden by trees, which were saplings when it was erected in 1977. We considered moving the sculpture to another location near

er the beach, but that approach had considerable cost and complexity involved.

RDMIA contracted with Christianson Tree Experts, and a qualified arborist, to trim the trees and to have Quilici Gardening trim/remove shrubs. The plaque was refurbished (without charge) by Brinks Awards & Signs of Santa Cruz. The results of the pruning and cleanup open up the island so that the sculpture can easily be seen.



Before trimming and cleanup



After trimming and cleanup

The sculpture was erected to honor Thomas Whaley for his community efforts.

He was an active member of RDMIA. Also, the commemorative solid brass plaque was restored, refurbished, and remounted having been found on the ground after the bolts holding it had corroded.

We are now investigating night lighting through the use of solar energy generation and battery storage.



Hearty “THANK YOU”

Lots of people have contributed time and resources to many of our local projects. In this issue, we particularly thank those who have helped on two recent projects:

1. Procurement and planting of 14 palm trees at the Esplanade
2. Refurbishing the damaged memorial plaque for the sculpture honoring Thomas Whaley

Esplanade Palm Trees

Contributors of funds:

Bill Weseloh (contributor and solicitor) and Bill’s neighbors on Beach Drive:

Robin H. Lee	Anne Adams
Valerie Lee Ow	Betty George Bailek
Jeanne H. Linsdell	Sara Barsotti
Kenneth E. Marrtz	Ruth Jones
Bob & Vivian Neasham	Loyal & Connie Kettman
Barbara Nelson	Robert & Sandra Walker
Elaine M. Ponzio	William & Jeanne Weseloh
Warwick Nichols	WL&S Investment Company
Sheri L. Laflamme	Virginia Parkinson

Donations of funds for equipment for Esplanade work:

Jan McCready
Pat Kelley

Organizers and Planters:

Patrick Kelley, Bob Sanchez, Peter Prillinger, Anita Heath, Les White; State Parks: Kirk Lingenfelter, Augie Ceballos, and Kevin Best; Public Works: Steve Weisner; Anderson Pacific: Doug Sereda. Other participants include Caroline Kelley, Anthony McMahon, Jeff Long, and Paul Mengum

Whaley Monument Plaque Refurbishment

RDMIA thanks Brinks Awards & Signs of Santa Cruz who refurbished (free of charge) the damaged memorial plaque erected on the monument honoring Thomas Whaley. [see article regarding tree trimming to make the monument more visible]

New Members

We welcome the following new members into Rio del Mar Improvement Association.

Graham & Sarah Ward
Stephanie S. Lipton
James Michael Lahey
Michelle Van Ooy/Marcus Caudill
Martha/Phil Moore
Sara Bossatti
Norm & Terry Turner
Byron Rifkind

Hidden Beach

In our January RDMIA meeting, Board members agreed to raise County and community awareness of Hidden Beach. Until now, though there have been Board members acting to protect Hidden Beach, these actions have been as individuals - not RDMIA.

You've probably visited Hidden Beach Park in the arroyo between Rio del Mar and Seascape. Hidden Beach is at the end of the path from the Park. This beach is unique because it is one of the few in our area where the sand reaches the base of the bluff behind it and the bluff, for the most part, is undeveloped.

The beach has an interesting (recent) history. A previous owner attempted to give the beach to the County many



Overview of Hidden Beach

years ago, but she wanted them to accept the arroyo as well. The County balked. The property was then sold to the current owner. There was, according to the County maps, a developable lot in the middle of the beach and the new owner made plans to build a very large house on it. When he indicated his intentions (using signs on the beach), lots of people became concerned. Fay Levinson organized neighborhood meetings at the Park to inform many of us of the issues, worked with the Coastal Commission, and also invited Ellen Pirie to become involved. This led to a long process of negotiation between Ellen and other County officials and the owner.

The result was that the owner of the land would build one bunker house at the end of Beach Drive and that he would deed the rest of the beach and the arroyo to the County: so far, so good!

The County, strapped for operating cash, has been very slow to "accept" the responsibility for the property because it will need to be maintained and has thus far not executed the necessary documents. The offer expires in 2016. While there is little chance that the beach will return to the hands of the owner because other government/environmental entities would likely step in, the need for the County to act has become urgent.

Another more recent development in the Hidden Beach area was the proposed development of five lots on the bluff immediately above Hidden Beach. The proposed houses were large and had small setbacks from the ocean- and arroyo-bluffs (28 feet). The County approved all five houses (at two different hearings) though several County residents raised issues of damage to public view-shed (from the beach), fragility of the bluffs and the concern that small setbacks would lead to the need for retaining walls, as well as concerns over erosion, and drainage. Appeals were made to the Coastal Commission based on the same issues brought up at the County hearings. During the appeal process, the effect of sea-level rise was suggested as a possible concern for increasing the bluff recession rate. Sea level rise was addressed by the Coastal Commission staff and geologist.



Bluff at Hidden Beach

The Coastal Commission addressed all five adjacent lots of the proposed development together. The applications for developing the first two lots at 660 Bay View were withdrawn prior to the hearing. The details of the Coastal Commission report are very extensive and if you are interested you can find it at:

<http://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2010/12/F8c-s-12-2010.pdf> Consideration for sea level rise caused the proposed 28 foot setbacks to be increased to 116 feet. Only one of the three remaining lots met that requirement and it was allowed to be developed with restrictions. The vote was unanimous. The owners have filed a suit against the Coastal Commission's decision.

Annual Meeting Highlights

Our Annual Meeting was held on Wednesday evening, October 13, 2010 at the Rio Sands Motel Conference Room.

RDMIA Treasurer Thomas Pistole provided a Treasurer's Report. (below)

Comerica Bank Account Balance \$ 6,519.88*

*Of this amount, \$2,800 is earmarked for the refurbishment of island #5 (the long island). This would leave a balance of \$3,719.88 for future projects

Vanguard Investment Account \$ 3,099.45
(+1.38 YTD)

Total Assets of RDMIA \$ 9,619.33

Robin Musitelli, Analyst for Supervisor Pirie addressed a wide variety of issues including: Poor Claire's, the vacation rental ordinance, and comments on the various propositions appearing on the November ballot. She also answered questions regarding issues associated with a large eucalyptus tree on Clubhouse Avenue.

Don Hill, Assistant Director of Public Works, provided a progress report on the necessary sewer realignment project—a portion of which has been staged and carried out on the Rio del Mar Esplanade. Current schedule indicates that the work in the Esplanade including the resurfacing the parking lot and improving the round-about in September of this year.

Patrick Kelley, RDMIA Board member, discussed the progress we have made on the RDMIA Work plan including the Palm Trees and future Esplanade landscaping, the progress on lighting and improving the Rio del Mar entrance sign on the ARCO wall, improvements, and our alternatives for improving the visibility of the Whaley sculpture.

A short video (DVD) about the Cement Ship titled: S.S. Palo Alto was shown and it met with great enthusiasm. Leah Gallegos, a UCSC Film Student created the video as part of her educational program.

The copy shown has now been given to the Aptos History Museum (John Hibble) where you may view it yourself.

This was followed by an excellent presentation by Chuck Carlson of the Aptos History Museum titled: Aptos Creek and the Rio del Mar Esplanade.

Afraid of widow makers?

Are you threatened by large trees which could fall or drop heavy branches? Winter storms were frightening for some of us. Heavy branches fell. We know of no injuries, but that is our good fortune. Big Eucalyptus have toppled when nobody predicted they would and they also drop large limbs without any apparent warning or cause.

Harvey Segall, a RDMIA member and the owner of Video USA, is helping some of his neighbors resolve such a danger by having an oversized tree removed. If you are threatened by such a situation, Harvey will share what he has learned about such issues about working with the County and other entities to obtain resolution. Send him a note including your name, address and phone number. Include suggested times for him to call you. His addresses are 531 Cuesta Drive & harveysegall@sbcglobal.net.

Neighborhood Block Party: a good way to meet neighbors!

Carolyn Kelley

We have always wanted a block party in our neighborhood, but you know how that goes, you get busy and then time goes by and there goes another year that you didn't do it. When we were out walking our dogs we took the opportunity to ask whether others were interested in the same thing and they were. People were interested!

We began by plotting out the area we wanted to cover and were worried that it was too big. The area included all of Bay View Dr., all of Toledo and all of Granada. We handed out flyers, called some key people to bring chairs, tables, and barbeques. Then we heard the weather forecast was rain in the late afternoon. Oh, brother! But we decided to forge ahead, anyway. Everyone was to bring something to share, (salads and desserts), and people needed to bring their own utensils and something to barbeque. Neighbors set up a stereo, tables, chairs, decorations and an information table. The information table was great because it was a place for people to come first, get a name tag, flyers about emergency information and sign up for RDMIA. Everyone mingled, met neighbors they had seen but really had not taken the time to talk to. Sometimes in our busy lives, we come out of our houses

and go to work, or to the store or wherever and don't take the time to visit.

Well the party was a success, we had 67 people show up and everyone seemed relaxed and enjoyed themselves. Even our Supervisor, Ellen Pirie stopped by. It didn't rain until 3:00 but by that time we were wrapping it up. Whew! We did it!

Weeks later, I noticed people waved more and stopped to chat. They knew who lived where. And when someone's alarm went off, people came out of their houses, to see what was going on. I like that! I think the consensus is that we'll have more block parties!



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Happy New Year!

Please remember to make your annual dues payment of \$25 for 2011.

Some of our current members have already paid for 2011. For those receiving mailed versions of this Newsletter, the number after your name indicates the most recent year you have paid. For those receiving email copies, we will indicate whether you have paid for 2011 in the e-mail which carries the newsletter URL.

We believe we've corrected the database errors we encountered in 2010. We've improved our process of data entry and checking. However if, when you receive your newsletter, you believe that our information is in incorrect, please notify us immediately.

Please make checks to RDMIA and send them to:

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



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IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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