

# Variations plague Directors of Rio Del Mar Impr. Assn.

by Maxine A. Cohen

Again and again Don St. John said, "We recommended denial, it was approved." He sounded frustrated and a little defeated.

St. John was reading from his notes on July meetings of the County's Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator, reporting to his fellow Directors of the Rio Del Mar Improvement Assn. on the outcome of matters of local concern.

He and Elmo Haden serve as "watchdogs" of planning and zoning matters for the association, whose membership now numbers some 700

residents and property owners. As soon as they receive the agendas, St. John and Haden check for Rio Del Mar properties listed, go out to the parcels, weigh the requests, and on behalf of the association, make unofficial recommendations to the County's planning personnel.

Not all the items in St. John's report went against their "common sense" recommendations -- but many did.

"Why is this happening?" asked Director Craig Ellis. "There used to be fewer differences between your recommendations and the action taken by the County. On these variations,

the exceptions seem to be the rule."

A number of the items concerned variations in set-backs that would allow construction within 10 or even fewer feet of the property line; as zoned, 20 feet is supposed to be the limit. The directors questioned the legality of these and other kinds of variations being granted, and pointed out not only parking problems but safety hazards being created.

Director Dolores Miller offered an explanation: "It's so complicated now -- there are so many ordinances, and there's so much more activity than a few years ago. With hundreds of items appearing on the Zoning Admini-

strator's agendas each month, there's hardly time for a thorough investigation of each one."

She added, "It's (caused by) sheer pressure and the disorganization that has occurred in the Planning Department in the past few years."

Mrs. Miller suggested, and the Board agreed, that meeting of the Directors with the 2nd District's Supervisor-elect and the head of the Planning Department should be arranged after the first of the year, in an effort to seek solutions to the apparent problems.