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Traffic congestion worries Rio del Mar group's president

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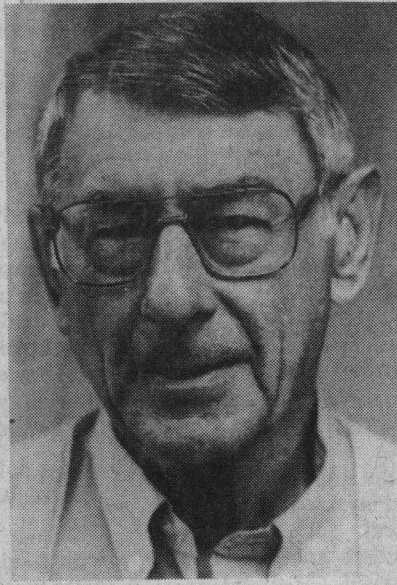
RIO DEL MAR — Vince Casey joined the Rio del Mar Improvement Association four years ago because he was concerned with increased neighborhood traffic. He's still fighting traffic congestion, except this coming year he'll be doing it as president of the improvement association.

Casey was recently elected president of the 833-household group, the largest such organization the county. He takes over for George Truckell, who stepped down and will serve as director for the next two years. Other officers and two new directors were also named.

A retired manager for the Bell Telephone system, the outspoken Casey concedes that increased traffic continues to be Rio del Mar's No. 1 problem. A recent association survey supports this.

Yet, in that same survey, respondents made it clear they would be unwilling to pay extra taxes or assessments to improve traffic. Such a question in the survey was shot down 136 to 53.

Casey believes the association has helped improve area traffic by pushing for a stop sign at Rio del Mar Boulevard and Clubhouse Drive, as well as its support for radar speed control by the Highway Patrol on



Vince Casey
Has traffic concerns

area streets.

Still, he is the first to say that traffic will only worsen in the future if nothing more is done.

"We're at an impasse," he said. "The most important thing we can do is educate people to realize two horrible facts. One, nobody knows how to stop growth and, two, nobody knows how to finance traffic improvements that come along with

that growth."

Casey believes the county can help by simply stopping approvals of development in Rio del Mar until public services, such as roads, are improved to handle such development.

"The way it is now, we approve development and, after the buildings are there and demand is expressed, then the county starts trying to come up with the money to solve the problems," he said. "The county should just say 'we don't have the road capacity' to grant permits."

Casey was not surprised at residents' refusal to pay for immediate traffic improvements. "I did think people would be somewhat more willing than they are. Right now, they seem overwhelmingly opposed to anything that will cost them money."

A "logical" step, according to Casey — one which wouldn't be expensive — would be the installation of more stop signs in the area. He names Clubhouse and Pinehurst drives as one intersection that badly needs help.

Casey sees the improvement association's survey as an important step in the right direction.

"The key thing we need to do now is to follow up on the survey and develop some kind of long-range plan from the community," he says. "This is where the county comes in.

They have to try and develop a practical plan that fits the needs of the community."

While Casey acknowledges the improvement association hasn't always been on the most favorable terms with the county, he feels it's time to mend such divisions.

Supporting Casey will be the association's officers and board of directors. Buzz Haines was elected vice president, while Les Walker and Anne Dolan were re-elected secretary and treasurer, respectively.

Al Downey was re-elected to the board along with Truckell. They'll be

joined by two new directors, John Richards and Leonard Wickliffe.

Richards was a manager for CMTA Consulting for 32 years. He retired to Rio del Mar in 1980. Wickliffe is retired from the railroad industry, in which he worked since 1941.

REFERENCE

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
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