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City Council candidates have no opposition

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The November election for Watsonville City Council is not likely to be a nail-biter for anyone — none of the four candidates is opposed.

Real estate agent and former City Councilman Tony Campos filed a nominating petition yesterday for District 6, the seat now held by Betty Murphy. Murphy is not running for another term. District 6 covers territory on both sides of Freedom Boulevard in the northwest section of the city.

Judy Doering-Nielsen, a vice president of lending at First National Bank, had taken out papers to run for the District 6 seat, but didn't turn them in. Yesterday was the last day to file for that district.

In District 1, which covers much of the cannery district, insurance agent Al Alcalá filed his nominating papers at the end of last week.

Paul Milladin has held the District 1 seat for the last two years, but has decided not to run again. Alcalá has been Milladin's appointee to the Planning Commission for the last two years.

Filing closed earlier in Districts 2 and 7, because the incumbents were running for re-election.

As it turns out, the incumbents are the only ones running — Oscar Rios for District 2, which covers an area surrounding the high school, to the north of Main Street and to the east of East Lake Avenue; and Betty Bobeda for District 7, which covers Bay Village and the Martinelli Street area.

Rios has served as vice mayor for the last two years. Bobeda was

appointed to the council to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Johnny Kacsmaryk.

The other seats, held by Mayor Todd McFarren, Lowell Hurst and Parr Eves, are not up for election this November.

Supporters of Watsonville's court-ordered switch to district elections had predicted that the district method would increase residents' participation in the political process, especially Latino residents.

While three of the four candi-

dates in this election are Latino — Alcalá, Campos and Rios — the small field of candidates may indicate a general lack of interest in all four districts.

Celia Organista, director of Adelante and a supporter of district elections, said she was not discouraged.

Not only is serving on the council a big time commitment, she said, but many people haven't had the opportunity to learn much about the council, let alone think they could run for it.

"We're in the process of devel-

oping leadership," Organista said. "When you have a disenfranchised community, how are you going to expect that in one or two years they're just going to pop out?"

This election, while dull in terms of outcome, Organista said, will give activists time to launch voter-registration drives in the Latino community and educate voters.

"The challenge is still there ... I'm still committed to the idea that the power is in the Latino vote, and the power will increase as registration increases," she said.