

Rio residents ask for better water system

Petitions demanding the immediate improvement in the water mains along Bonita Drive in the Rio del Mar area will be presented Feb. 2 to Soquel Creek County Water District directors.

Sharon Matthews has collected signatures from 92 of the 100 residents in the Bonita-Rincon Drive area, asking the water district to start work as soon as possible on 4,000 feet of eight-inch water main under Bonita Drive, to replace the existing two-inch mains.

Mrs. Matthews said the water district had shown the construction project in its

1980 capital improvement program, but it was dropped from the budget.

Water District General Manager Bob Johnson confirmed that the project is on the district's long range capital improvement plans, but was deleted from this year's budget when residents on top of the hills above Mrs. Matthews began collecting signatures for an assessment district that would rebuild the water system in the entire area.

That effort, spearheaded by the Rio del Mar Improvement Association, has apparently failed.

"Now, we'll have to take

another look at it," Johnson said.

The general manager said the district's construction budget is committed this year to the La Selva Beach area, and it will be up to the water directors to decide if they want to include the project next year. The project will cost \$140,000.

Mrs. Matthews says the issue goes far beyond that of an adequate water supply for the hundreds of homes south of the freeway in the salamander preserve area.

The area is a "water deficient area" on the Aptos fire department maps and new homes built there in the

last three years have been required to have fire alarm systems wired into the fire department.

But, said Mrs. Matthews, only five percent of the homes — those built in the last few years — have the alarm systems.

"We are wood houses in a wooded area. There isn't enough water to fight a fire.

"The issue now is to get the fire main into the improvement plan.

"It's a pretty scary situation because we could get burned up," she adds.

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