1,100 Residents Demand Garfield Library Be Opened--Immediately

By BILL NEUBAUER Sentinel Staff Writer

A demand for the immediate reopening of the Garfield Park branch library was given to Librarian Charles Atkins Tuesday by a 10member delegation representing 1,100 petitioners.

And one of the representatives told Atkins bluntly: "If you can't find some way to open the library we will find somebody else who can."

The West Side Neighbors Association delegation included Dr. David Brezel, Craig Merrilees and Ed Muegge.

Atkins told the group, "The Garfield Park Library is only one of five branch libraries we had to close because of budget cutbacks after Proposition 13 was passed. If we had the money we would open all of them and we would reactivate the Bookmobile."

Muegge questioned money is that short, pointing out that the only savings to the library system from the Garfield Park closure is in the system in terms of use of the same building utilities, and he stressed to The Sentinel:

"Mrs. Donaldine McRae, the librarian, is still working in the system, but in another and was refurbished at a cost of \$17.585 in 1976.

library, so they have not saved on salary."

Merrilees said the neighborhood group will go directly to the Santa Cruz City Council on Aug. 22 to get the library reopened. "We may bring all 1,100 petitioners to the council meeting," he added.

Merriless said the library is essential to an area that has many elderly and handicapped people who cannot get to the main library.

Atkins told The Sentinel that after Proposition 13 passed he was faced with a budget reduction of some 15 percent, at least. To be equitable, he said, "we closed one out of two libraries in the southern part of our service area, we closed one out of three libraries in the city, we closed one out of three libraries in the San Lorenzo Valley, we closed La Selva Beach and we deactivated the Bookmobile.

"If I have any choice in this, I will reactivate the Bookmobile first," Atkins said.

The Garfield Park Library is the oldest in for that purpose. It was built in 1914-15 for \$2,615 with a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Corp



Librarian Charles Atkins, left, receives petition from Betty Stebbins and Dr. David Brezel.

