



Leslie E. Kossoff/Journal

Wilkie Smith-Leith stands outside her house yesterday. A proposed road would mean her house would be torn down.



Richard McCaffery/Journal

Residents protest a proposed road, outside the board of supervisors meeting Tuesday night.

# Couple to sue county

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## New road would cut through their property

By RICHARD McCAFFERY  
Journal staff writer

A Brentsville District couple plans to take legal action against the county for allegedly concealing a plan to build a road that would destroy their home.

Gary Moody and Wilkie Smith-Leith, who live on Smith Lane in Brentsville, said the county never told residents they had agreed, with the Virginia Department of Transportation, to connect the Liberia Avenue extension with Brentsville Road. The 2.2-mile, four-lane road would destroy 11 houses on Smith Lane. The interchange is part of the Route 234 bypass.

About 20 protestors from the Brentsville/Limstrong Preservation Coalition picketed the board of supervisors at a public hearing Tuesday night. Moody then told supervisors, "The interests of Brentsville residents can only be protected by bringing legal action against Prince William County. I'll pursue every legal avenue to see that the culprits who have betrayed the citizens' trust are brought to justice."

Moody says the county never sent a 1991 resolution to VDOT informing them of the county's wish to realign Liberia Avenue extension at Godwin Drive, a move that would save his home. He says the county deliberately withheld the resolution, prompted by pressure from developers who want Brentsville Road widened to provide access to the

Route 619 corridor.

Robert W. Wilson, county director of public works, denied that. He said the county sent the resolution and nothing was withheld from residents. But he said the county staff and VDOT decided Liberia Avenue had to be aligned with Brentsville Road during conversations between 1991 and 1994.

Residents heard about this in 1993, at a VDOT public information meeting. "We were stunned when we saw the design," Leith said. "VDOT told us this was the way the county wanted it."

County supervisors claim VDOT pushed for the alignment. "It was not our decision to put it at Brentsville Road," William J. Becker said. "It's not our decision. VDOT has the final say."

VDOT and the county both say the road design came from the other's initiative. But both said alternatives weren't feasible.

John Martz, a VDOT senior transportation engineer, said, "The board of supervisors passed a resolution to consider [realigning the road], and it was decided there wasn't an alternative. Then the county didn't rescind the earlier resolution. They should have gone back and passed it, which they probably forgot to do." Martz said VDOT received the county's 1991 resolution.

County staff is arranging a work session on the issue for residents and the press.