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Klingle won't reopen

By CHRIS KAIN
Current Staff Writer

Constant flooding has uprooted trees, washed away retaining walls, and caused severe damage to the Klingle Valley stream bed. Flooding caused its closure in August 1990.

Roughly 50 residents attended the commission's meeting. Most were heartened by the department's change of heart, which followed months of lobbying. The effort, which resulted in a petition with 1,200 signatures, included such local luminaries as Tim Russell, host of NBC's "Meet the Press."

The announcement met some opposition, however. Some neighborhood residents said the road's closure makes travel more inconvenient. Residents of other parts of the District also attended the meeting, with one saying that Woodley Park residents were elitist.

"You're denying me access to a city road," said Bob Scofield, a Blagden Avenue resident who said he could not get the city to install even a stop sign near his home.

The issue has divided the area's advisory neighborhood commissioners, some of whom contend that the closure of Klingle Road has meant more traffic on other streets.

In the end, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C voted down a motion to accept the department's position.

Hundreds of Woodley Park residents have won their battle to keep Klingle Road closed.

The District no longer plans to reconstruct the stretch of road between Woodley Road and Rock Creek Park so it can reopen for traffic, Department of Public Works officials announced at a Feb. 27 advisory neighborhood commission meeting. Instead, the city hopes to use federal funds to replace the deteriorated sewer line beneath and to put a bike path or trail above.

Gary Birch, the department's chief of road construction, said the reduction in traffic since Klingle's closure has made the area safer for pedestrians. Birch noted the many schools and homes near Klingle's intersection with Woodley Road.

"Klingle Road should remain closed," Birch said. "It is a more intelligent, more sensitive decision."

Even so, residents should not expect any work on the project for at least two years, Birch said. The District's cash crunch has caused the department to suspend virtually all contracts, and the federal government withdrew its funding due to the controversy surrounding the project, Birch said. Not replacing the asphalt surface will save about \$500,000, he said.