

## ***Miramichi Leader Weekend, (le 2 février 2001)***

### **Mayor blasts Historic Society**

### **Robichaud House investigation 'On the verge of blasphemy,' says Neguac mayor**

by Gail Savoy

NEGUAC - The dispute between the Neguac Historical Society and the Neguac Village Council over the Otho Robichaud House is heating up.

The historical society president Fernand Robichaud has issued a press release saying an investigation into the conduct of the village related to the controversy over the designation and development of the historical home has begun and the agreement between the two groups has been suspended.

"It is alleged that the Village of Neguac, by a series of actions, has severely hampered the Neguac Historical Society's ability to fulfill its obligation to develop the historical site contrary to the Oct. 12, 1996 agreement," said Robichaud.

He continues in the release saying this action is being taken because village council refused to adopt a resolution to confirm its commitment to the development of the house.

"This request for a resolution was aimed at addressing the continuing doubt that has persisted with this council since their election in 1998, who by a series of actions, including public criticism, has severely damaged the Neguac Historical Society's image and ability to secure public funding."

But Neguac mayor Richard Breault says the historical society has created its own problems by refusing to clear up the authenticity problem with the province over whether or not the historical property is actually Otho Robichaud's or his son's Louis.

"The accusations being made are false, misleading, and are on the verge of blasphemy," he said.

The historical society wanted council's resolution to state the house was Otho Robichaud's. They then wanted council to write a letter to, the province saying the same thing.

### **Council demands update on Neguac Historical Society's handling of property**

"It is time to bring out the facts. Where is the Proof we have hindered the development of the house?" Richard Breault, mayor

But Breault said council refused to do this because regardless of whose house it is, it is still a historical property and needs to be developed.

Breault says the agreement signed clearly states the village's only obligation was to make payments to the owner and to receive updates on the house's development. The society was to develop the house in a reasonable time frame. Because this has not happened council wants to know what is going on.

Breault said written requests were sent to the society asking for an update on the house.

"They have refused to give council an update on what has happened over the past four years," he said. "Legally we have the right to have a response. It was part of the agreement."

The mayor says council will now meet to discuss the issue and decide what will be the next step.

"It is time to bring out the facts. Where is the proof we have hindered the development of the house?" Breault asked.

Council will also be contacting the provincial heritage department to find out why they have let this situation continue for so long. The Neguac Historical Society has refused to let the province survey the property to settle the question over whether it is Otho Robichaud's house.

"The historical society has to be open to finding out whose house it was."

Breault says questions are being asked by village residents.

"It's time to give the answers to this whole issue," he said, adding council will not allow this situation to go on for very long.