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Historic society, village wrangle over house

by Gerrit Bosma

NEGUAC - The controversy over the Otho Robichaud House in Neguac continues this summer.

Chairman of the Societe historique de Neguac, Ferdinand Robichaud, is frustrated by what he said are attacks and lack of support from the Neguac village council.

Robichaud is angry the Otho Robichaud house was not included in the village's tourism guide this Summer.

In 1996 the Societe historique de Neguac signed a deal with the village in which the village of Neguac paid for the house.

However, Robichaud said the village's lack of support in leaving the house out of the guide could lead to the death of the historic project. There are other problems. The provincial heritage department isn't sure if the house is really the one built and owned by Otho Robichaud in 1789 and has questioned requests for provincial funding to assist the restoration.

But, Ferdinand Robichaud and the Neguac historical group want to move on from those past arguments.

"We are doing our best to make this a good investment for the village. What is in the past is in the past, " said Robichaud.

"We need to go to Fredericton and get a mandate from the province, but we need the village to back us up."

Neguac mayor Richard Breault said the village has tried to support Robichaud's group.

Breault said the problem is, it doesn't seem like the historical society wants to work with them.

"The village is trying to communicate with Mr. Robichaud, but he is not being cooperative," said Breault.

"It goes two ways. We will continue to offer support, but we have to be made aware of what is happening."

Breault said the only reason the Otho Robichaud house was on the last local tourism brochure was because the historical society told the village the house would be completed and open for the 1999 tourist season.

It wasn't.

"Why would we put the house in the tourism guide this year if it isn't open," said Breault.

The Neguac mayor said the village wants to help the group with the Otho Robichaud house, but he said the society has to work out the authenticity question with the province.

"Mr. Robichaud's problem should be with the province's heritage branch, not us," said Breault.

"If they tell us what is happening, we can be supportive. But don't tell us the village is not supportive if you can't back it up?"

Whitewashing set Saturday

This Saturday Aug. 5 the Societe historique de Neguac will be hosting as white washing for the public at the Otho Robichaud house.

Everyone is welcome to come help white wash and clean up the house and enjoy the food and drinks which will be provided.