

New Credit residents fight council's zoning bylaw

*by Lynda Powless
Editor*

NEW CREDIT- A group of about 30 local residents said they are willing take their fight to dump a local zoning bylaw to the Minister of Indian Affairs if New Credit Band Council does not hear their protest.

The group are demanding the New Credit Band Council rescind a local residency bylaw that, they say, has prevented at least four people from building homes on their own lands.

And, they said, most of the community didn't even know they had

a zoning bylaw in place until local people tried to access housing money.

Former band council chief Maurice Laforme said one local resident put in a driveway and mapped out where his house would be when he applied for housing money.

"They told him he couldn't build there because it wasn't zoned residential. It's his own land. They said he couldn't get housing dollars unless he conformed to their zoning bylaw. We didn't even know there was a bylaw."

LaForme said the council is hold-
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New Credit residents want zoning bylaw dumped

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ing community's housing money hostage. "They won't let you access it unless you follow their bylaw. But its our land. We should be able to build whatever we want on our own land."

And he said they are using scare tactics. "They're telling people the zoning bylaw is to keep piggeries and big industry out but in all my years I've been here I've never seen anyone put up a piggerly and big industry isn't exactly knocking our doors down."

LaForme said if he had the money, "I'd put up a chicken coop just to defy their bylaw."

The move sparked a protest by about 30 people outside the band office last Friday, who presented the band council with a motion and petition Saturday morning demanding the band council rescind the bylaw.

In a sometimes heated exchange a group of about 30 residents, attending a "public" meeting last Friday found Band Council Chief Carolyn King sitting in her truck telling people the meeting had been cancelled.

Maurice LaForme, said the meeting had been cancelled without proper notice and they found themselves locked out of the band building.

"We're going to meet in the parking lot, I guess," he said. He said the meeting was not a band council meeting but a public meeting.

Chief Carolyn King said the Friday night meeting had been cancelled, because, "it was a meeting to discuss amendments to the



Marvin LaForme has been fighting the zoning bylaw over his property the Green Willow Diner. The business was in place before the bylaw. "Now they're trying to shut me down."

zoning bylaw."

But she said the council had planned a community meeting on the bylaw for Saturday. "It was premature. We're going to be discussing the whole bylaw Saturday, so it was premature to hold a meeting Friday to talk about amendments."

King said the bylaw had been put in place in Feb., of 1996. "People were told about it at the time," she said.

But LaForme, said he was never aware of it. "I knew they were doing a geological survey of the reserve, then. Carolyn King was running it with someone out of Kitchener. But that was to map out wet lands and high lands. Nobody said anything about a zoning bylaw."

Out of the 30 people at the meeting, no one said they were aware

of the bylaw. "How can they pass a bylaw when no one knows anything about it or seen it. They said they put out notices to go to the band office and view it but that's their responsibility to get it to our homes and hold meetings," LaForme said.

LaForme said the bylaw is redundant. What they were doing Saturday is redundant because we passed a motion at a duly convened public meeting Friday night calling on them to rescind it. They wanted to revise it but we're saying no, dump it."

LaForme said the council is not always right. "When you make mistakes have the courage to admit you blew it. If we had more progressive citizens here like Marv LaForme (owner of the Green Willow diner and gasbar) we'd have the most beautiful reserve in Canada. He has a beautiful place there and they're giving him a hard time. He was there before the bylaw and now they're trying to shut him down but he's fighting it."

New Credit Council met Monday night to discuss the bylaw. Chief Carolyn King did not return Turtle Island News phone calls by press time.

LaForme said if the council does not rescind the bylaw, the group intends to send minutes of its meeting and motion to the Minister of Indian Affairs and ask the minister to intervene.