

# Council critic banned from chambers Litigation, use of recording device cited

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By Rob Gowan

Town of South Bruce Peninsula council critic Craig Gammie has been banned from the town's council chambers.

South Bruce Peninsula council passed a motion at its Nov. 20 meeting that Gammie be prohibited from entering the town council chambers, committee meetings and town hall facilities until all litigation is completed.

In a background paragraph in the council minutes from Nov. 20 it stated, "Mr. Gammie has pending litigation against the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, was warned to not leave the tape recorder in Council Chambers yet it happened again on November 20, 2012."

In an e-mail response to questions, Gammie wrote he had been unjustly banned from town hall. He replied to the ban in the form of something he calls Craig's Commentary, which regularly appears on his blog, [craiggammieblog.com](http://craiggammieblog.com)

In his commentary released Sunday, titled "[Bad Smell At Town Hall](#)", Gammie wrote that he is confident the courts will strike down the ban resolution. He wrote that the legality of the ban resolution will be heard in court on Jan. 31. "The ban against me is clearly a retaliatory punishment for me bringing proceedings against individuals," Gammie stated in the commentary. "This makes the ban even more vindictive, more malicious, more repugnant, more unjust, more improper, and just as illegal."

Coun. Marilyn Bowman, who made the motion to ban Gammie and also supported it, said the reason council decided to have Gammie banned is because he was already given one warning about leaving a tape recorder in the chambers during a closed session, but a recorder was left on a table in the council chambers when the town went into closed session on Nov. 20.

"I feel bad that it happened, but at the same time you can't have that happening," said Bowman. "It could have been underneath a chair and we wouldn't have seen it."

Bowman would not comment on any pending litigation Gammie has against the town.

In his commentary released Sunday, Gammie stated that he has brought applications before the courts to have Coun. Jim Turner removed from council, to have Mayor John Close removed from the Police Services Board and to have several members removed from the BIA Board of Management, all for alleged contraventions of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.

"These are not proceedings against the Town. They are proceedings against individuals," Gammie states. "They are very similar to the recent successful proceeding that removes Rob Ford (Toronto mayor) from office as of December 7 (barring a successful appeal.)"

Gammie has been a regular observer of council meetings at South Bruce Peninsula. On his blog he discusses issues of South Bruce Peninsula council and is often critical of members of council on decisions they have made.

Gammie was also one of four individuals named in a defamation lawsuit Rhonda Cook, the town's

former chief administrative officer, filed over comments posted on the Bruce on the Bruce blog site. The suit was eventually withdrawn.

Gammie has run into trouble at council meetings in the past with regards to his recording device. In early 2011, police were called to the council chambers after Gammie refused to disclose if he had a recording device during a committee of the whole meeting. The town had passed a resolution banning recording devices, which was later rescinded.

Council had initially banned the public from recording meetings after Gammie taped a closed portion of a committee of the whole meeting. Gammie said he inadvertently left the recording device on during the in camera session and informed council of what he called "an accident" as soon as the council chamber was opened again to the public.