

Charge against Mayor Close still up in the air

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By Scott Dunn

A regional Crown attorney must review "voluminous material" before deciding whether the privately brought obstruction of justice charge against South Bruce Peninsula Mayor John Close has a reasonable prospect of conviction or if it is in the public interest to proceed.

Grey County Crown attorney Michael Martin provided an update in the Ontario Court of Justice Thursday. The case is to return to court Feb. 7.

Regional Crown attorney David Foulds has the case.

The Crown intervened on the charge after Sauble Beach resident John Strachan went to a JP to have the mayor charged. Close is alleged to have, between April 1 and Aug. 21 in South Bruce Peninsula, obstructed justice. "As mayor," the charge reads, "he did instruct the bylaw enforcement officer not to enforce" the dynamic beach bylaw against Joseph Szewczyk, who with a development company owns a section of the north end of the beach.

Strachan alleges Szewczyk drove on the beach and when Strachan tried to get the town to charge Szewczyk, he was told it couldn't. This led to Strachan's efforts to get the mayor charged, Strachan has said.