

Crown still weighing Close charge

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by Scott Dunn

An obstruction of justice charge against South Bruce Peninsula Mayor John Close was adjourned Thursday to March 7.

Grey County Crown attorney Michael Martin said David Foulds, of the regional Crown's office, is still interviewing people and has not made a decision about how to proceed. He must decide whether the privately brought charge against Close has a reasonable prospect of conviction and if it is in the public interest to proceed.

The Crown intervened on the charge after Sauble Beach resident John Strachan went to a justice of the peace to have the mayor charged. Close is alleged to have, between last 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.

Last month South Bruce Peninsula council amended that bylaw to exempt private properties.

Strachan alleges Szewczyk drove on the beach and when Strachan tried to get the town to charge Szewczyk, he was told it couldn't.