

COURTS

# Sex offender's freedom may be restricted

BY DAWN LIERSCH  
STAFF WRITER

Bradford residents, fearful a potential violent sexual offender has moved to town, won't know until later this week whether a provincial court judge will decide to restrict his freedom.

John Joseph Stewart — who could be facing restrictions, including a curfew — appeared in Bradford provincial court last Thursday. He was called to court after Attorney General Charles Harnick approved a move to have a provincial court judge place

restrictions on him.

Although restrictions were expected to be implemented that day, Stewart requested a delay until Oct. 1. Judge T. Cleary also granted a request for a publication ban on the proceedings.

Even though Corrections Canada no longer has authority over Stewart because he has served his full jail term, South Simcoe Police made a request for restrictions under a year-old amendment to the Police Act.

The restrictions may be enforced at Stewart's next court

appearance unless he decides to fight the move or apply for a new hearing date.

Police have requested:

- a 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew unless Stewart is in the company of a support group member from a Mennonite organization he attends;
- mandatory psychiatric counselling;
- restrictions on his use of alcohol and non-prescription drugs;
- any change of address be reported to them;
- an order preventing Stewart

from travelling anywhere outside a 100-kilometre radius of Bradford.

However, Stewart's supporters said he has already complied with most of the conditions.

Friend Linda Whiteside, who attended court with Stewart, has said he attends Alcoholics Anonymous and is already under psychiatric care.

Angry residents have been pressuring Stewart to leave town ever since police issued a public safety warning on July 30.

During a raucous public meeting in late August, some residents

said they would feel a little more at ease if restrictions are placed on Stewart.

Stewart was sentenced to 9-1/2 years in prison in 1988 after pleading guilty to attacking six women and injuring the 10-month-old daughter of one victim.

He brutally attacked a seventh woman while out on bail for those attacks. According to published reports, she was found battered, bloody and partially disrobed in the stairway of her downtown Toronto apartment building with Stewart on top of her.

## Unsafe road, town blamed for deaths

Town under fire, in court

BY RICK VANDERLINDE  
STAFF WRITER

East Gwillimbury's failure to purchase a \$6,300 strip of land it needed to fix a deadly stretch of road was unacceptable, Mayor Jim Mortson told a Newmarket court yesterday.

During vigorous cross-examination, Mortson agreed it was intolerable that it took the town four years to obtain a "sliver" of land so it could reconstruct a dangerous hill where a Newmarket man was killed and another was paralyzed in 1992.

Mortson admitted the steep hill on Con. 2 — the site of at least 13 accidents — would have been repaired three months before the fatal July 9 crash if the land deal had been finalized.

A \$5-million civil lawsuit claims the town is responsible for the death of Jonathon Roycroft and serious injuries to William Goff by failing to correct the well known safety hazard.

Lawyer Peter Boeckle suggested there was no reason, other than a series of mistakes, that East Gwillimbury couldn't have obtained land needed to level off the hill.

Boeckle said although East Gwillimbury council passed a resolution accepting a \$6,300 purchase price for the land in April 1988, no one followed up on the deal.

Between March 1989 and September 1991 there are no town documents to show that the land was being pursued.

"I'd have to ask some questions — I don't know what happened," Mortson replied. "There was never any direction from council to not do anything."

The dangerous hill was reconstructed in the fall of 1992, after the accident and following a fiery public meeting where residents demanded the road be fixed.

During that meeting, Mortson said the town couldn't rebuild the road because it was still trying to purchase the land.

The hill was levelled off about four months later, even though the town only had a verbal agreement with the new owner of the same land; it had passed a resolution to purchase four years earlier.

Mortson replied that if drivers simply obeyed the 50 km-h speed limit, the steep hill wouldn't have been a hazard.

The trial continues.



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