

Celebrate Caledon set to move back to Caledon East, be held on Father's Day Weekend]

2022 event was held on Canada Day at Albion Hills Conservation Area

By Zachary Roman

The Town of Caledon's flagship event, Celebrate Caledon, will likely look a little more like it used to in 2023.

The event is set to move back to the Caledon East Civic Campus and be held on the Father's Day weekend. At Caledon Council's December 6 General Committee meeting, Town staff brought forward a report recommending the above changes to the event and more.

The staff report was submitted by Caledon's Manager of Community Recreation, Jessica Stovin. It noted that up until and during 2019, Cheers Caledon, Caledon Community Services' (CCS) Velocity Ride in support of Caledon seniors, and Caledon Day were all held on Father's Day weekend in June.

In 2022, Celebrate Caledon was combined with Canada Day festivities for a July 1 event held at the Albion Hills Conservation Area; and Velocity was held the same day at the Caledon East Civic Campus.

Cheers Caledon did not run in 2022, and will be amalgamated with Celebrate Caledon in 2023.

While Celebrate Caledon, which was held in 2022 for the first time in two years after pandemic shutdowns in 2020 and 2021, ran successfully, attendance was not quite what Town of Caledon staff hoped it would be.

In 2022, Celebrate Caledon and Velocity both experienced challenges due to the change

in date, reads Stovin's report. Challenges included, but were not limited to, statutory holiday inflation such as staffing costs, vendor fees, rental costs, delivery fees and interest of vendors, and availability of a reasonably priced headliner. There was also added pressure to generate interest and attendance due to the number of pre-existing events that take place on July 1.

These factors meant that the attendance of approximately 8,000 people at the 2022 Celebrate Caledon event was a 38 per cent decrease from Celebrate Caledon attendance in 2019.

The Town of Caledon and CCS are eager to get back to the old location and date for Celebrate Caledon. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, which partnered with the Town for the 2022 event, understands the Town's rationale for wanting to move back to Caledon East and also supports the move.

Cheers Caledon will be embedded in Celebrate Caledon 2023 as a cider and beer garden featuring local brewers.

Stovin's report goes on to say that Celebrate Caledon's largest draw is its musical headlining act, which is often a Canadian rock legend. In the past, Trooper and Kim Mitchell have played the event, for example.

Stovin said in 2023 staff would like to leverage the return to Caledon East to explore a higher-calibre of Canadian headliners, which staff in turn hopes will draw higher attendance and more sponsors.

Moving Celebrate Caledon back to the Caledon East Civic Campus will provide opportunity to expand the footprint, partner with Velocity, integrate Cheers Caledon, recapture the walkable neighbourhoods, enhance the headliner performance, and provide a quality event in the centre of Caledon, reads the staff report.

Town staff's recommended changes to Celebrate Caledon were approved on consent at Council's December 6 general committee

meeting and were recommended for approval at Council's December 13 Council meeting.