

Confusion surrounding 2020 Caledon Home & Lifestyle Show

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

More than seven months have now passed since the Caledon Chamber of Commerce unexpectedly pulled the plug on its annual Spring Home Show, less than 48 hours before the event was set to begin. Now, one local resident is at odds with the organization over next year's show.

Liz Shaughnessy and Associates have organized their own Home and Lifestyle Show in Bolton this upcoming Spring. But, what's confusing is that the Chamber is also, claiming to be hosting their event on the same weekend. At the very same location. Now, let's try to make some sense of this.

Businesses purchased tables to vendor at the Caledon Spring Home Show this past April. The Chamber of Commerce, without any explanation, cancelled the show leaving several exhibitors confused, shocked and out of pocket.

Several exhibitors reached out to Liz Shaughnessy and Associates to host their own home show here in Caledon, with confidence in the Chamber's ability to properly organize the event at an all-time low.

Shaughnessy has an extensive background in marketing and event planning, and spent the majority of her career putting on shows all over the province. Shows just like the Caledon Spring Home Show.

Now retired, Shaughnessy took it upon herself to give the people of Caledon a 2020 Home and Lifestyle Show.

This is where it gets confusing.

Liz Shaughnessy made sure to schedule her show to take place a little later than usual here in Caledon, so as to not compete with other shows taking place in nearby communities.

Things were going well. Liz had several vendors interested in signing up, and talks were well underway. Then things suddenly stopped.

'Everything's going swimmingly, we're getting great support and then I started hitting these roadblocks when I started to do follow-ups on the show vendors. They asked me why I was going toe-to-toe with another show in the community, and I said 'I'm not', explains Shaughnessy. 'They directed me to the Caledon Chamber of Commerce's website, which has been inactive for a year and a half, and suddenly this new thing shows up on their home page promoting their 2020 Home Show, on the same dates as mine and in same location.'

Shaughnessy went to the Town to confirm and verify that she, in fact, did rent out the Albion Bolton Community Centre for her home show. The Town reached out to the Chamber of Commerce for further explanation as to the promotion on their website, and got not luck reaching them.

'The concern is misinformation to small businesses in Caledon, who will make commitments to the home show, which will likely be cancelled again,' says Shaughnessy. 'That's wrong. Misinformation is wrong, it happens, but it has to be stopped.'

She added, 'It's clearly confusing exhibitors who depend on shows like this for the core of their business.'

The Town of Caledon wasn't able to provide verification on who currently holds the booking for the community centre on April 18 and April 19 next year, but commented, 'every year, Town recreation staff reach out to organizations who have previously booked Town space for events to confirm if they wish to rent the space again. If confirmation is not received, or the space is no longer needed

by that organization, the space becomes available for anyone to rent.?

Liz Shaughnessy is adamant she has booked the facility, and has put down a deposit, while the Chamber of Commerce has yet to return any calls made by this reporter.

One thing is for sure, the Chamber is advertizing the event on their website. Questions still remain over the late cancellation of the 2019 Home and Lifestyle show. Thus far, the Town has not confirmed who holds the booking, with David Arbuckle, GM of Strategic Initiatives, stating it's against Town policy to release details regarding town-related event bookings.

Stay tuned for more on this developing story.