

Bravo's 'Summer House' causes an uproar in Montauk

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The Montauk Chamber of Commerce is disputing Bravo's claims that its controversial new reality series, "Summer House," was filmed there.

In Tuesday's announcement about the Jan. 16 launch, Bravo strongly implied that this newcomer about nine people and their "boozy brunches, beachfront thrills, rosé parties, charity galas, bonfires, and jaw-dropping hookups" had indeed taken place in Montauk this past summer.

Here's the problem: The show wasn't technically based in Montauk at all, but in nearby Amagansett. Now, Montauk's Chamber of Commerce is asking the network to drop various references to Montauk in promotions.

Laraine Creegan, executive director of the organization, said in a phone interview, "The Town of East Hampton prohibited them from doing any filming on public property, and then they approached many businesses and were [also] rejected by many of them."

Creegan now says Montauk residents have been further inflamed by the use of the word "Montauk" in on-air promotions. A two-minute one featuring the tagline "What happens in Montauk stays in Montauk" features a cast member dismissing

the Hamptons as a place “that’s like your mom’s friend who wears pearls. Montauk is like your mom’s friend’s daughter. She a little promiscuous, and by ‘little’ I mean a lot.”

Cue to the “Jersey Shore-esque” hot tub scenes, followed by bleeped words, another quick shot of a guy wearing a T-shirt with the word “Montauk,” and another promising that “nothing is off-limits.”

Says Creegan, “I don’t appreciate that it’s being mentioned all over these promotions. We knew what this was going to turn into and we don’t need that kind of publicity. We’re trying to bring families into Montauk.”

To outsiders, this all may sound like a minor squabble over semantics — or over two scenic East End towns most national viewers probably couldn’t tell apart anyway. But the arrival of a reality show that appeared inspired by MTV’s notorious “Jersey Shore” almost instantly inflamed Montauk when its development was first announced earlier this year. Per reports — some of which first appeared in The New York Post’s Page Six — some residents even plotted to boycott or disrupt production.

A story in Thursday’s East Hampton Star further reported that the standoff between residents and the show began after Bravo used photos by local photographer James Katsipis for “promotional material.” Katsipis, per the paper, had not given his permission to use them.

In a phone interview, East Hampton Town Supervisor Larry Cantwell said the town would not support an effort to get Bravo to drop the Montauk mentions: “Government doesn’t have a role in violating freedom of speech here,” he said, adding, “With respect to the [show] content and whether I personally like it or not, based on what I know, the message is contrary to the message that we believe is true about Montauk. It’s a wonderful community and fishing village but the party scene has been a serious issue.”