

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)  
Meeting Minutes Draft – October 2014**

1 **Date:** October 15, 2014  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm  
 3 **Location:** Chamber of Commerce  
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**Attendees:**

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	A	At-Large	Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Ian Golden	✓	Recreation	Susie Monagan	✓	Arts-Culture
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture	<i>John Spence</i>	✓	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
John Gutenberger	E	Cornell	<i>Bruce Stoff</i>	✓	<i>CVB, Non-Voting</i>
Lynette Scofield	✓	Lodging	<i>Dwight Mengel</i>	✓	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging	<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	✓	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture	<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	✓	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Andy Zepp	E	At-Large	<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	A	<i>TCAD, Non-Voting</i>
Stephen Nunley	✓	At-Large	<i>Will Burbank</i>	✓	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Steve Hugo	E	At-Large	<i>Beverly Baker</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Ken Jupiter	✓	At-Large	<i>Carol Kammen</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Mike Mellor	✓	At-Large	<i>Jon Reis</i>	✓	<i>Associate Member</i>
Anne Gossen	✓	At-Large	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Sue Stafford	✓	TC3	Jennifer Turner	✓	Staff
Christy Agnese	✓	At-Large			

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 10 **Also in attendance:** Gavin Landry, Executive Director, NYS Division of Tourism, Carol Eaton, Chair of  
 11 Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, Nicole Mahoney, Director of the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism  
 12 Council  
 13

14 **Meeting Agenda**

- 15 Special Presentation – Gavin Landry  
 16 Special Presentation – Finger Lakes Region Association of TPA's  
 17 July STPB Meeting Minutes  
 18 Privilege of the Floor  
 19 Fall 2014 Tourism Grant Recommendations:  
 20 • ACTION – Recommend Fall 2014 Community Celebrations Grant awards – Carol Kammen  
 21 • ACTION – Recommend 2014 Budget Adjustment from Marketing and Advertising Grants to New  
 22 Tourism Initiative Grants in the amount of 12,000 – Tom Knipe  
 23 • ACTION – Recommend Fall 2014 Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grant awards – Ethan Ash  
 24 • ACTION – Recommend Fall 2014 New Tourism Initiative Grant awards – Ann Gossen

25 Report – Update on Grant Program Review  
 26 Chair's Report – Rick Adie  
 27 Staff Report – Tom Knipe  
 28 CVB Report – Bruce Stoff  
 29 ADJOURN  
 30

31 **The meeting was called to order** at 3:07 PM.  
 32

33 **September 2014 STPB meeting minutes** were approved with no changes.  
 34

35 **Chair's Report** – Rick Adie reported that a Nominating Committee was appointed; Anne Kellerman will  
 36 serve as Chair of the Committee. The next Nominating Committee meeting will take place the last week in  
 37 October. The Strategic Tourism Planning Board, Tom Knipe, and Bruce Stoff will be presenting at the next  
 38 Tompkins County Coalition of Governments meeting regarding AirBnB and their relation to tourism and will  
 39 include a discussion on taxation regulations. Presentation of the three 2013 Tourism Partnership awards  
 40 will take place in the month of November. Christy Agnese received praise on behalf of the STPB regarding  
 41 the role she has played in documenting the deconstruction of the Wine Center; interviews of dozens of

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42 people have been conducted. Rick noted the meeting he and Sue Perlgut were invited to by Phyllisa  
43 DeSarno, the Deputy Director of Economic Development for the City of Ithaca, on the progress on the  
44 construction of Hotel Ithaca. David Hart presented at the meeting; discussions covered the expansion plans  
45 and the 4 million dollar gap in funding on the proposed expansion. Creative ways to fill the gap were  
46 discussed as well as the question of use of the Tourism Capital Grants. More discussions will take place  
47 regarding the guidelines of the use of Tourism Capital Grants.  
48

49 **Special Presentation “I Love NY”** – Gavin Landry was introduced as the Executive Director of New York  
50 State Division of Tourism. Members of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board introduced themselves.  
51

52 Gavin Landry is a graduate of Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration. He noted that the  
53 difficulties that the brand “I Love NY”, has had since being launched in 1977-1978 as a way to help  
54 Broadway find more business. With the “I Love NY” program being a state government funded program it  
55 has been subject to the economy, politics, and war. Christine Nicholas, of New York City and Company,  
56 recruited Gavin Landry while he was working as a hospitality consultant for numerous hotels.  
57

58 With the tourism industry being reported as the 4<sup>th</sup> largest employer in the state with an estimated 900,000  
59 jobs and the recognition and industry support, Gavin was able to organize a Tourism Summit. Increased  
60 awareness of tourism throughout the state has been possible through the utilization of property of the  
61 Metropolitan Transit Authority, Long Island Railroad and Port Authority. Components of the advertising  
62 included the utilization of Real Estate that includes the installation of 3D element advertising of the T5  
63 terminal at JetBlue at the JFK Airport which encouraged the utilization of trains. The T4 terminal features  
64 Welcome to New York advertising in 11 different languages which covers about 90% of inbound travel. New  
65 York City represents 60% of the total tourism spending in the State of New York.  
66

67 By reaching out to the regional council and advertising representatives as well as state partners their group  
68 was able to find out about upcoming events in New York State for 2014. 50 of the 350 events were selected  
69 as major events for which activation would be provided. Some of the major activations included the Bass  
70 Masters event, the Adirondack Challenge, and the Professional Golfers Association event in Rochester.  
71 The Angler of the Year event was noted as a very successful event within the Finger Lakes.  
72

73 International marketing has been a major priority of the New York State Division of Tourism. Efforts are  
74 being made in working with overseas media, making New York State products available online and to travel  
75 agents with the added benefit of training. Offices have opened in four cities in China and another office will  
76 be opening in Australia. A Chinese media tour took place over the summer. China Southern, the third  
77 largest airline in the world, visited New York and decided to establish a 4<sup>th</sup> non-stop flight from China.  
78

79 STPB members asked about the focus on cultural tourism in New York State. The Winter Carnival and  
80 Rochester Jazz Festival were noted. Mr. Landry mentioned New York State’s consolidated funding  
81 application that is a streamline process that works with the 10 Regional Economic Development Councils.  
82 He encouraged members to take advantage of funding that is available through the CFA. The focus on agri-  
83 tourism was noted as priority of New York State; noted events included the yogurt summit and beer wine  
84 and spirit summits. Taste of New York is the Governors initiative to encourage the purchase of all things  
85 food and beverage created in New York State. He noted the farm to table movement an area it makes  
86 sense to focus on. Dedicated funding and structure will be essential in making New York State Best in  
87 Class as a state level tourism program. Landry suggested exploration of the idea of a car rental tax, which  
88 has been used successfully as a source for tourism funding in other states.  
89

90 **Finger Lakes Region Association of TPA’s** – Carol Eaton introduced herself as the Chair of the Board of  
91 the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council. She noted the strength of the TPAs being due to the  
92 collaboration of all 14 counties of the Finger Lakes region making up the Board. As of January 2014, the  
93 board formed their own 501C3. She noted that their organization is not based on membership; all county  
94 TPAs work on behalf of their own individual counties. The diversity of the events in the region can range  
95 from championship games to wine tours. Their organization formed five years ago which at that time  
96 contracted with Quinn; a public relations firm. Visiting journalists and hosting site visits were a long term  
97 investment of time and resources that grew phenomenally. Break the Ice Media has since been brought in

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)**  
**Meeting Minutes Draft – October 2014**

98 to help with the overwhelming response in PR opportunities from coverage from both Quinn and the I Love  
99 NY brand.

100  
101 Nicole Mahoney of Break the Ice is contracted by the region but does interact on behalf of the Finger Lakes  
102 as the regional director of the Finger Lakes. Some recent coverage secured by the Quinn PR program  
103 included the Finger Lakes on the Today Show. The segment was given by the editor of Travel and Leisure  
104 magazine and featured haunted hotels and spooky sites across the country. The Allegiance Bed and  
105 Breakfast, Spook Hill and The New York State Haunted History Trail were all mentioned. There were four  
106 million national viewers and immediate bookings within an hour of the segment. Upcoming features include  
107 a story by Vogue magazine on the firelight camps at La Tourelle. I Love Fresh Air is a program funded  
108 through the TPA's that is an outdoor campaign that has included the launch of a magazine, website and TV  
109 campaign. A third round of funding through the TPA is pending. The Finger Lakes Regional Tourism  
110 Council is registered for the New York Times Travel Show in January that will feature an I Love New York  
111 Corridor with an adventure theme. The Scottsville Tourism Information Center is located in the Rochester  
112 area. Future plans include a destination market analysis and strategic marketing plan.

113  
114 **Fall 2014 Tourism Grants**

115  
116 **Community Celebrations** – Sue Perlgut reported on the 2014 Community Celebrations grants on behalf of  
117 Carol Kammen. Sue mentioned the two grant cycles that included new applications in the fall. These  
118 requests included the Cayuga Heights Lecture Series, Civil War Nurses Monument, to be installed at TC3,  
119 and the photo exhibit of types of manual labor the county is losing. Carol Kammen noted that the grants  
120 leaned towards the arts and will lead to more interesting projects into the future. Motion to approve funding  
121 for \$3,691 for Community Celebrations as outlined in the agenda packet by Sue Perlgut, seconded by  
122 Christy Agnese, and approved unanimously.

123  
124 **Budget Adjustment** – Tom Knipe reported that there \$65,000 in requests were made for the New Tourism  
125 Initiative grants with \$36,500 in available funding. The Tourism Marketing and Advertising grant has a  
126 recommendation to fully fund \$8,000 in requests with \$20,000 in available funding. Tom, working with  
127 Committee Chairs suggested moving the remainder of the funds from Tourism Marketing and Advertising to  
128 the New Tourism Initiative grant funding. The change was discussed and supported by both of the grant  
129 review committees. A resolution to the County Legislature will be made for a budget adjustment in the  
130 amount of \$12,000. A motion to reallocate \$12,000 from the Tourism Marketing and Advertising grants to  
131 the New Tourism Initiatives moved by Steve Hugo, seconded by Stephen Nunley, and approved  
132 unanimously.

133  
134 **Tourism Marketing and Advertising** - Ethan Ash reported on the Tourism Marketing and Advertising grant  
135 requests. There were three applications for the Ithaca Skate Jam, the Ithaca Fringe Festival, and the new  
136 application for the Ithaca Bike Rental. The Tourism Marketing and Advertising Committee decided to  
137 recommend fully funding all three. Ethan discussed the success of the Skate Jam and noted the growth  
138 with the event and social media performance that was comparable to Grassroots. The Fringe Festival will  
139 trade publications to try and get trade in the marketing. The Ithaca Bike Rental is part of the Ithaca Youth  
140 Bureau that will have bikes available to rent to members and visitors in the community in Stewart Park and  
141 along with Cayuga Waterfront Trail. Support was given to Ithaca Bike Rental with the feedback that their  
142 organization reaches out for possible resources for partnerships, and marketing and awareness. Ken  
143 Jupiter discussed the differences in methodology and level of confidence in the estimates of the number of  
144 attendees and booked room nights at each event. The board also discussed questions about financial  
145 sustainability relating to the Bike Rental program. The board encouraged Tourism Program staff to work  
146 directly with the Ithaca Youth Bureau to ensure a successful business model. A motion to approve funding  
147 for \$8,000 for Tourism Marketing and Advertising grants as outlined in the agenda packet by Ethan Ash,  
148 seconded Susie Monagan, and approved unanimously.

149  
150 **New Tourism Initiatives** - Anne Gossen reported on New Tourism Initiative grant requests. The Ithaca  
151 Bike Rental was approved for funding for capital funding rather than the staffing funding requests. The  
152 Fringe Festival, Ithaca Shakespeare Company, and Skate Jam were all repeat requests that were deemed  
153 satisfactory. The Finger Lakes Beer and Cider Festival is a new applicant that will take place at the Steam  
154 Boat Landing Farmers Market. Motion to approve funding for \$48,500 after the \$12,000 budget modification

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)**  
**Meeting Minutes Draft – October 2014**

155 from Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants to New Tourism Initiatives, to the overall moved by Anne  
156 Gossen, and seconded by Rita Rosenberg. Members discussed placing a contingency on funding for the  
157 Bike Rental project that it show satisfactory progress, to be verified by the grant administrator, prior to funds  
158 being released. The motion with this stipulation was approved unanimously.

159  
160 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe reported on the grant process and policy questions the programs need to focus  
161 on. The four major questions that the Committees need to meet are:

- 162 1) The question of combining committees in order to address the duplication of applications for different  
163 grants  
164 2) The low number of applications for Tourism Marketing and Advertising (should the application process  
165 be modified to make it easier to apply).  
166 3) Should tourism infrastructure investments be differentiated from events in the process? If so, how?  
167 4) Should there be ROI thresholds?  
168

169 The Grant Review Committees will meet to discuss these four questions in further detail.  
170

171 The deadline for Tourism Partners Award nominations has been extended to November 1<sup>st</sup>. There is a  
172 minimum requirement for the nominee to have produced 200 room nights. The Tompkins County Planning  
173 Department has released a draft of the Comprehensive Plan. There are three upcoming public meetings  
174 from 4-7 pm in Danby on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Lansing on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the Tompkins County Public Library on  
175 November 23<sup>rd</sup>. The meetings are set up as open houses so attendees will be able to walk in between  
176 those hours to provide comments. The room tax report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter had a noticeable gap between  
177 room taxes and Smith Travel Research estimates; Tom will continue to monitor and report. Upcoming  
178 funded events were mentioned. Member recruitment has received two applications from lodging; no arts &  
179 culture applications have been submitted. The deadline for applications is November 20<sup>th</sup>.  
180

181 CVB Report – Bruce Stoff reported discussed the contributions of Cornell Architecture students about the  
182 possibilities for what a visitor's center could look like. He noted that The STR report for August had an  
183 average daily rate of \$175 with occupancy of 90%. Foot traffic at the downtown location was up 63%. He  
184 noted the Common Council will be voting on whether to approve plans for new a boutique hotel, a 123 room  
185 property set to be built behind Carey Building, facing onto Seneca Way. The issues with the shortage of  
186 rooms on weekends but lower occupancy mid-week and lack of conference center space were discussed.  
187

188 **Update on Coltivare** – Sue Stafford reported on the delays with construction of phase one that has  
189 prevented her students from using the kitchen space at Coltivare. She is hopeful that phase two will be  
190 completed before the holidays in preparation for a grand opening. Members suggested the VFW, and  
191 Cooperative Extension as alternative possibilities for kitchen space for her students.  
192

193 **Announcements** - Rita Rosenberg invited members to attend the Ag and Culinary tourism community  
194 gathering at GreenStar on November 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00-8:30pm.  
195  
196

197 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:01pm.  
198

199 Respectfully Submitted,  
200 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant  
201 Tompkins County Planning Department  
202

203 **Next Meeting Scheduled**

204 Wednesday December 17, 2014