

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

1 **Date:** May 21, 2014
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** State Theatre of Ithaca
 4
 5

Attendees:

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

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8

9 **Also in attendance:** Bob Nicholas and Ewan Barr (Tompkins County Airport), Doug Levine (State Theatre)

10
11 **Agenda**

- 12 State Theatre Presentation
- 13 Airport Presentation
- 14 Downtown Ithaca Presentation

15
16 **STPB Business**

- 17 March Meeting Minutes
- 18 Privilege of the Floor
- 19 Chairs Report
- 20 Staff Report
- 21 CVB Monthly Report
- 22 STPB Budget Committee Report
- 23 Coltivare Update
- 24 Ag & Culinary Tourism Task Force Report
- 25 Special STPB Committee to review ACOD program
- 26 Member comments on recently attended funded events

27
28 **The meeting was called to order** at 3:05 PM.

29
30 **State Theatre Presentation** – Doug Levine introduced himself as the Executive Director of the State
 31 Theatre and followed with a presentation. To view the State Theatre presentation, please follow the link.
 32 [http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/docs/STI%20PPT%20Presentation%20for%20STPB%20Ma](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/docs/STI%20PPT%20Presentation%20for%20STPB%20May%202014.pdf)
 33 [y%202014.pdf](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/docs/STI%20PPT%20Presentation%20for%20STPB%20May%202014.pdf)
 34

35 **Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport Presentation** – Bob Nicholas introduced Ewan Barr as the lead
 36 consultant for the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport as of early 2014. He was brought in to consult for the
 37 airport due to the sequestration that took place in March 2013 that resulted in 14% decline in passengers.
 38 Ewan Barr went on to give a presentation on the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. To view the
 39 presentation on the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport click on the following link.
 40 http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/docs/Ithaca%20Tompkins%20Regional%20Airport_0.pdf

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41 **Airport Presentation Q & A**

42

43 **The two things that come to mind when I think of the airport are the Cornell bus and the fact that**
44 **Ithaca no longer flies into LaGuardia. Can you comment on that?**

45 The traffic was not yielding a high enough percentage on a local level. We are in discussions with one of
46 the carriers to see if there is a way to add service to LaGuardia.

47

48 **Are there any plans to add direct non-stop flights to Atlanta and Chicago?**

49 Chicago is on the radar with the expansion of American Airlines. The airport is in preliminary discussions
50 regarding these locations. Right now we need to show carriers commitment.

51

52 **What leverage does the airport have in dropping parking rates?**

53 Parking rates don't necessarily drive the usage of the airport.

54

55 **Who are the airport's targets for marketing investments?**

56 Key stakeholders are Cornell University and Ithaca College. Cornell has a multi-million dollar travel budget
57 where they allow their faculty to make their own flight plans. We are trying to encourage the faculty to use a
58 booking code to receive discounts in order to track the flights.

59

60 **Are there any plans for marketing to leisure travelers to encourage more inbound tourists to fly?**

61 We are focusing on marketing in all areas.

62

63 **One of my biggest complaints is the invasion of privacy that occurs when luggage is checked. Can**
64 **you comment on this?**

65 We just had a media event where we cut a ribbon introducing the new equipment that was installed last
66 week. This replaced the wand that had to go over every single bag and over all items in passengers
67 luggage which was an invasion of privacy. The new machine processes 255 bags an hour without the
68 necessity of opening the bags which allows 99% of bags to go through the belt without being touched.

69

70 **What can the Tourism Board do to further support the airport?**

71 Helping us market through the area and emphasizing the great service. We would like to further discuss
72 funding opportunities in the future. In addition, years ago it used to be that if one hub closes another would
73 take its place. This is no longer the case. It is critical for a community this size to make sure the airport is
74 functional because if it goes away it will have major impact on the community.

75

76 **The cost to get to and from the airport is a challenge. Can you comment on this?**

77 There are a number of challenges to continue working to try to address. Our focus on the positives points of
78 the experience of flying through the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport.

79

80 **Downtown Ithaca Presentation** – Gary Ferguson gave a presentation on downtown Ithaca that included
81 an update on the construction of the Commons. Click on the following link to view his presentation.

82 <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/docs/Downtown%20%26%20Tourism%202014.pdf>

83

84 **April 2014 STPB meeting minutes** were approved with no changes

85

86 **Chair's Report** – Rick Adie opened his report with mention of the opportunity to raise a glass to toast
87 Anthony Hopson and Jean McPheeters who are attending their last STPB meeting. A gathering will take
88 place after the meeting. The budget requests are all in; there will be a budget hearing that will follow next
89 week. The Strategic Tourism Planning Board meeting June 18th will focus on the budget presentation that
90 will go to EDC in the 1st part of July. Guidance to submitters was to decrease expenses by 3.5% over the
91 current year's spending in order to carve out money for strategic initiatives. A discussion will take place at
92 the June meeting that will focus on the Visitors Centers. Members were encouraged to tour the Visitors
93 Centers prior to the next meeting.

94

95 **Staff Report** - The Tourism Capital Grants have passed the Legislature. Staff attended the CFA workshop
96 that included discussions on funding opportunities for partners and the possibility of outreach on future
97 projects. As members of the Southern Tier Economic Development Councils Tourism Working Group, both

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98 Tom Knipe and Bruce Stoff have been invited to take part in discussions regarding challenges and
99 opportunities related to attracting more international visitors upstate. This supports the development of
100 strategies under the Governor's new priority, called 'Global New York', which will be part of this year's CFA
101 process. The Heritage Tourism Task Force has scheduled a first meeting date. The evaluation project of the
102 CVB is continuing to move forward with preliminary results going to the P&E committee this summer.
103

104 **CVB Monthly Report** – Bruce Stoff reported that the CVB was successful in meeting the 3½% decreased
105 target in their 2015 budget request. Motor coach sales have reached eight booked tours so far this year.
106 Mary Rachun attended a conference in New York City for Chinese tour operators in which she presented a
107 CVB-produced book called the Story of Ithaca that was in Mandarin and English. The CVB hosted an open
108 house at the downtown visitors center which features a new mural. Bruce also share the new STR
109 numbers.
110

111 **Coltivare Update** – Coltivare is currently under construction. Sue Stafford announced that Denis Boucher
112 has been hired as the new Director of Operations. He has taught culinary arts and has a degree from the
113 CIA. The hiring process is underway to recruit new management and team members. Enrollment for fall is
114 currently the fastest paced of any of the other programs on campus. Marketing for increased enrollments
115 into the program have included a posting of 4 new videos on the website as well road trips with admissions
116 staff and printed brochures. Projected enrollment for fall is expected at 60-70 students.
117

118 **Ag & Culinary Tourism Task Force Report** – Rita Rosenberg. Discussions at the May meeting centered
119 around creating authentic and unique experiences for visitors. A list of research topics was created.
120 Members are looking into local and regional agriculture & culinary efforts and identifying best practices and
121 what efforts do not work. A resource list of local Ag & Culinary contacts is also being compiled.
122

123 **Special STPB Committee to review ACOD program** – Rick Adie announced that the Arts and Culture
124 Organizational Development Grant program will undergo review and has asked that STPB Members
125 representing Arts & Culture participate along with a member of the County Legislature, program staff and
126 STPB leadership. This effort will consist of two or three meetings over the next several months to develop
127 responses to emergent questions within the program around purpose, eligibility and funding.
128

129 **Member comments on recently attended events** – Rick Adie mentioned an online survey is available for
130 use in providing feedback on funded events. Members discussed and provided positive feedback on
131 recently attended events as the Fringe Festival, Spring Writes, Dinosaur Train and Skate Jam. Tom Knipe
132 mentioned several upcoming events: Restaurant Week May 31st – June 8th, Cayuga Trails 50 on June 1st,
133 GIAC Festival on June 14th. Members mentioned the Hospitality Star Program June 17-18. The Hospitality
134 Star Program is free to employers and includes lunch. The Ithaca Festival is hosting its 1st Ithaca Film
135 Festival that will take place on June 1st from 1-5 pm.
136

137 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:55pm.
138

139 Respectfully Submitted,
140 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant
141 Tompkins County Planning Department
142

143 **Next Meeting Scheduled**
144 Wednesday, June 18, 2014