

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Draft Meeting Minutes – June 2015**

1 **Date:** June 17, 2015
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** CVB
 4
 5

Attendees:

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

7

8 **Also in attendance:** Joe Mareane, Tompkins County Administrator
 9 Todd Miner, Fred Bonn (State Parks), Heather McDaniel (TCAD), Ronda Roaring

10
 11 **Meeting Agenda**

- 12 1) Opener
 13 2) May STPB Meeting Minutes
 14 • ACTION – Approve Meeting Minutes
 15 3) Privilege of the Floor
 16 4) TCAD Presentation – Heather McDaniel
 17 5) Ice Climbing Project Presentation – Todd Miner and Fred Bonn
 18 6) Chair's Report – Sue Perlgut
 19 7) Staff Report – Tom Knipe
 20 8) Committee/Project Check-ins
 21 • Wayfinding – Jennifer Tavares
 22 • Visitor Profile Study Update – Bruce Stoff
 23 9) 2016 Room Tax Budget Recommendations
 24 10) Visit Ithaca Pre-Beta Presentation
 25 11) Announcements

26
 27 **The meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM.**
 28

29 **Opener** – Sue Perlgut opened the meeting by asking members of the STPB to engage in an interactive
 30 exercise. Members were given arts and culture, heritage, outdoor recreation, and agriculture tourism as
 31 categories and were asked to form groups based on their interests not including their current field of work.
 32 Members then were able to come up with different attractions they would recommend within the county that
 33 would fall under the category of choice.
 34

35 **May 2015 STPB meeting minutes were approved** with no changes.
 36

37 **Privilege of the Floor** – Ronda Roaring discussed her concerns related to the Chmura study, and made
 38 several comments about the 16-page draft RFP that was in the agenda packet. She went on to suggest
 39 questions to ask tourists when conducting a new visitor profile study.
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41 **TCAD Presentation** – Heather D. McDaniel, Vice President and Director of Economic Development
42 Services, opened her report by providing an overview of TCAD, noting that they have been operating for 51
43 years. Their mission was noted as “TCAD is dedicated to building a thriving and sustainable economy that
44 improves the quality of life in Tompkins County by fostering the growth of business and employment, a
45 flourishing economy, with exciting innovative firms, that inspire and attract a talented workforce.” Focuses
46 are on long-term quality employment opportunities, investing significant capital into the community, and
47 focus on infrastructure investments that will support the community and environment. Economic
48 development and technical assistance are key services offered.
49

50 **Topics Discussed:**

- 51 • Partnerships
 - 52 • Investments
 - 53 • Mentorship
 - 54 • Strategic Planning
 - 55 • Financial Assistance
 - 56 • Property and Sales Tax Assistance
 - 57 • Business Loans
 - 58 • Community Development
 - 59 • Infrastructure
 - 60 • Air Service
 - 61 • Upcoming Projects
- 62

63 **To view the presentation visit:** <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/board>
64

65 **Ice Climbing Project Presentation** – Todd Miner opened his presentation by providing background on his
66 efforts in obtaining permits for ice climbing in Tompkins County, noting the feasibility study made possible
67 by funding from the Tompkins County Tourism Heritage fund, and went on to report on the meetings with
68 State Parks and the City of Ithaca and advisory group that has formed that has conducted research on ice
69 climbing in Salmon Falls, Catskills, Colorado and Minnesota. The goal of this initiative is to provide
70 recreational activities to locals and to open the market to the hundreds of thousands of already active
71 climbers. A meeting in Albany with Mayor Svante, Deputy Commissioner, and Chief Legal advisor of State
72 Parks proved to be successful in receiving tentative state approval for small pilot planned for winter of 2016.
73 Fred Bonn, Regional Director of State Parks in the Finger Lakes, went on to report that risk will be the most
74 significant issue and that they are currently creating rescue plans for specific sites. A third party is being
75 identified to handle permitting for ice-climbing at Six Mile Creek, and both Robert Treman, and Buttermilk
76 Falls State Parks. Ithaca Falls was noted as being a more long-term site.
77

78 Members asked about roles. State Parks would act as landlord while a third party would permit ice climbing
79 at selected locations. For more information or collaboration contact: todd.miner@ucdenver.edu
80

81 **Chair's Report** – Sue Pergut took the afternoon FAM tour which was part of the two-day Hospitality STAR
82 training being held this week. She went on to report that \$900.00 is set aside in 2015 for board education
83 and she will be circulating a list of possible conferences and or webinars that some members may be able
84 to take part in. Josh Friedman discussed the possibility of creating a display or kiosk that would let the
85 public know of upcoming events sponsored by the Tompkins County Tourism Program. Future discussions
86 on a communication strategy and branding for the County Tourism Program will take place with a
87 committee in September.
88

89 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe announced that he has recruited Ed McMahon of the Urban Land Institute to
90 give a talk in Ithaca on Thursday September third on sustainable tourism development. Cornell will provide
91 his speakers fee and STPB members are highly encouraged to attend. Tom went on to note his meeting
92 with Jonathan Tourtellot, a fellow with National Geographic Traveler who coined the term geo-tourism; more
93 in depth conversations will take place at an upcoming meeting. Tom went on to report on his meeting
94 tonight with the City of Ithaca Administration Committee where he will be asking for their commitment of
95 City support for the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail plan. Tom went on to inform members that projects that put

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96 in white papers for the Upstate Revitalization Initiative will need to also apply through the CFA. A link will be
97 forwarded to board members with all of the funding opportunities available.

98
99 **Committee Check-Ins:**

100
101 **Wayfinding** - Jennifer Tavares reported on the meetings related to the Wayfinding Strategy. She went on
102 to note the possible state level sources with a number of different requirements and the plans for significant
103 funding requests from major stakeholders. Responsibility for signs was discussed as many of the signs will
104 direct to Cornell University, TC3, and Ithaca College. Local leverage will play a major part in the funding
105 requests made to New York State. Concerns of not having a solid commitment from the Tompkins County
106 Implementation funds were noted. Tom Knipe further discussed the timing issue with using the Strategic
107 Tourism Implementation funds.

108
109 **Visitor Profile Study Update** – Bruce Stoff reported on the Research Committee meeting about the
110 Chmura study discussion. He noted that after processing the 19 pages of comments against the survey
111 questions from the previous RFP, it was decided that they can go straight to the existing Request for
112 Proposal that was included in the agenda packet. Members were asked to read the RFP and provide
113 feedback. The intent at this time is to partner with Discovery Trail and Stewart Park on the study...there are
114 some cost sharing benefits and efficiencies to these partnerships.

115
116 **2016 Room Tax Budget Recommendations** – Tom Knipe reported that the assumptions for revenue will
117 remain at 4% for 2015 and 6% for 2016. After budget adjustments, the reserve balance at the end of 2015
118 will be about \$97,000 and \$66,000 by the end of 2016. A special thank-you went out to the Budget
119 Committee for their work. Tom walked through the detailed budget recommendations provided in the
120 agenda packet. The STPB will vote on the budget at the July meeting after a possible presentation to the
121 Economic Development Committee.

122
123 **Visitithaca.com Pre-Beta Presentation** – Kristy Mitchell presented board members with a snapshot of the
124 newly structured visitithaca.com website. The new site is adaptable with standard and visual navigation that
125 can be independently programmed and can covert to stacked icons for use on cellphones. The new site will
126 also feature a portal to lodging, visitor events and aims to invite local partnerships as well as sales
127 opportunities related to advertisement space. The website is expected to be ready for STPB members to
128 beta test soon.

129
130 **Announcements** – Josh Friedman shared the new Come for the Gorges Stay for the Show marketing
131 campaign which was funded with room tax. Rita Rosenberg announced that tickets are available online for
132 the Savor the Finger Lakes Festival on September 3rd. The Gorges marathon was announced as having
133 attendees from 18 states as well as Canada. The re-opening of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail will be August
134 30th.

135
136 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:02pm.

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

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142 **Next Meeting Scheduled**
143 Wednesday July 15, 2015