

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

1 **Date:** June 18, 2014
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** CVB / Chamber of Commerce
 4
 5

Attendees:

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

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9 **Also in attendance:** Jennifer Tavares, Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, Michael May, Tompkins
 10 County Chamber of Commerce Board, Kristy Mitchell, Jodi LaPierre, Convention and Visitors Bureau
 11

12 **Meeting Agenda**

- 13 May Meeting Minutes
- 14 Privilege of the Floor
- 15 Chairs Report
- 16 Staff Report
- 17 CVB Monthly Report
- 18 Presentation – Listening to Artist - Entrepreneurs in the West of Ireland – Susie Monagan
- 19 CVB Visitors Services Program – Bruce Stoff
- 20 STPB Budget Committee
- 21 Comments on recently attended funded events
- 22

23 **The meeting was called to order at 3:03 PM.**
 24

25 **May 2014 STPB meeting minutes** were approved with no changes.
 26

27 **Chair's Report** - Rick Adie opened the meeting with the announcement that there will be no Strategic
 28 Tourism Planning Board Meeting for the month of August. Plans to meet at the Cayuga Nature Center in
 29 September are in the works. Gavin Landry from I Love NY has agreed to present and plans are tentative for
 30 the month of October. The Heritage Tourism Task Force had its first meeting on June 10th led by Stuart
 31 Stein. A special committee to review the Arts and Culture Organization Development Grant Program has
 32 been formed that will focus on how ACOD's grants have been established and its recipients. Will Burbank
 33 will serve on the committee as well as 4 people who occupy the Arts and Culture seats who are Anne
 34 Gossen, Susie Monagan, Sue Perlgut, and Ethan Ash. Martha Armstrong, Tom Knipe, Rick Adie and Anne
 35 Kellerman will also sit in on the special committee meetings. A Higher Education Tourism Committee will
 36 kick off in the fall. The Marriott, The Hampton Inn and Hotel Ithaca will create an additional 280 rooms
 37 downtown.
 38

39 **Introductions** – Jennifer Tavares was introduced as the new President of the Tompkins County Chamber
 40 of Commerce to the members of STPB by Mike May the Chair of Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce.
 41 Mike went on to describe Jennifer as having great energy, enthusiastic, and as having great leadership

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42 skills. Jennifer introduced herself and noted that she will be making weekly visits for the next month before
43 she becomes full-time. STPB members went around the room introducing themselves.
44

45 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe reported that phase 1 of Tompkins County Wayfinding Interpretive Signage Plan
46 has been completed by the consultants as of May 22nd. The Heritage Tourism Task Force has met. An Ag &
47 Culinary Tourism Task Force member, Emma Frisch has appeared on the Food Network's Food Network
48 Star Show and has been promoting Ithaca and farm to table. Rita Rosenberg mentioned her successful
49 showing at Cinemapolis in which she received top honors. The show airs every Sunday a 9 pm. The
50 Heritage Tourism Group's newest members Jeff Chusid, Professor in City and Regional Planning and
51 Sherene Baugher who is the president of the Statewide Archeology Group and professor at Cornell have
52 already started contributing new ideas to the Heritage Group, such as about Main Street programs and
53 historic preservation. Program evaluation has been moving forward. The CVB has been working with
54 Cooperative Extension and will be ready with a report on their efforts to the P&E Committee the 3rd week of
55 July. They will share the preliminary results of the program modeling work and systems evaluation
56 protocol. Tom has also been meeting with other tourism programs including the Discovery Trail and the
57 WIB to begin thinking through logic models and evaluation plans for their programs.
58

59 **CVB Monthly Report** – Bruce Stoff announced that the occupancy rate for the month of May was at 63%,
60 which is 7.2% higher than May last year. The average room rate is \$177.87 a night. Compared to May last
61 year, in May 2014 total room supply was up 6.8%; demand was up 14.5% and revenue was up 16.6%.
62

63 **Listening to the Artist-Entrepreneurs in the West of Ireland** – Susie Monagan opened her presentation
64 by mentioning her interest of creative economy in a rural context. Her Fulbright Grant allowed her to travel
65 to Galway on the west coast of Ireland. Her central research question was "How do artists and
66 entrepreneurs in the west of Ireland's creative enterprises make sense of their role and value their remote
67 location?" The Creative Edge was mentioned as the project she was involved with that focuses on
68 developing creative industries in remote areas and believes that creative industries will have huge growth
69 potential as well as competitiveness to other parts of the world. Their project is funding these initiatives in
70 different countries. Most of the data that Creative Edge looked at were census related and mapping
71 information while Susie focused on speaking with the creative workers. The constant festivals are huge
72 draws in Ireland. Some of the questions that were asked of artist/entrepreneurs about their roles, where
73 they developed their skills and what are some of the opportunities and challenges of being in a rural area.
74 She found that behavior of creative economy actors are not money motivated and are probably more
75 interested in accessible art and social change. The lifestyle and landscape support of the community, fewer
76 distractions, and good talented people to work are some of the positive points of working in a rural area.
77 Challenges of working in rural communities mentioned were isolation, cost of travel, low standards
78 expected, lack of support and or professionalism and immigration due to lack of opportunity.
79 Recommendations made to Ireland were to reframe broader networking and to develop cottage industries.
80 (Susie's presentation is available online: [http://prezi.com/t3upkiledmq/stpb-](http://prezi.com/t3upkiledmq/stpb-june/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)
81 [june/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/t3upkiledmq/stpb-june/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)
82

83 **CVB Visitors Services Program** – Bruce Stoff discussed the national benchmarks and the transparent
84 budget that he and Tom Knipe worked on. The Visitors Center opened in 1985. Room tax was implemented
85 in 1987 which allowed for the move to the current location in 1989. Jodi LaPierre discussed the fulfillment
86 and database management and mentioned the in-house fulfillment rather than the outsourcing that most
87 centers use. Bulk Lead Management, email lists, newsletters, as well as marketing and advertising that
88 include design support and internal marketing. Additional sales support includes research and marketing
89 and design work that is developed to bring people into Tompkins County. Partnerships include Downtown
90 Ithaca Alliance as well as lodging and attraction properties, campus community and the Wayfinding
91 Program. She noted the Hospitality Star Program success of being full for the past 3 years. The CVB has
92 learned that most visitors' centers are located in high traffic areas and feel that the new center at
93 Taughannock Falls will be a good move. 90% of travelers have cellphones and use them when trying to
94 navigate and plan their excursions. One of the goals of the visitors' services team is to streamline
95 communications and create partnerships with social media sites. Bruce noted that although the average
96 county stay is 1.4 nights, groups that visit the visitor's center the average stay is 3.5 nights. Of the surveyed
97 65 counties in New York State, the majority have agreed that walk in visitors have declined due to the use
98 of cellphones. The visitors centers that are doing well have incorporated technology and or have made their

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99 locations more of a tourist attraction through displays of art and architecture. Discussions centered on the
100 idea of making information available around the clock to visitors and tourists by live agents working from
101 home. The CVB's presentation is available online:
102 [http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/CVB%20Visitor%20Services%20Benchmarks%20June%20](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/CVB%20Visitor%20Services%20Benchmarks%20June%202014.pdf)
103 [2014.pdf](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/CVB%20Visitor%20Services%20Benchmarks%20June%202014.pdf)
104

105 **STPB Budget Committee** – Rick Adie reported that the July meeting will be used to vote on the
106 recommended budget. The projection of revenue was informed by a forecast from PKF. The projection of
107 revenue growth is 5% for both 2014 and 2015. The first quarter of 2014 had a decrease from 2013, down
108 3%, so this will be watched closely. The reserves have been cut down to 3% of revenues. The current
109 reserve is at \$45,000 and is expected to grow to \$63,000 by the end of the year. The submissions of budget
110 requests came in line with guidance; all programs were asked to decrease their budgets by 3.5%. Tom
111 Knipe highlighted the effort to grow reserves to 3%; \$10,000 will need to be taken from revenues. The
112 tourism marketing spending will be allocated to at 60% and the remainder 40% will be used for product
113 development. Responding to STPB guidance from May, the Budget committee has recommended
114 \$150,000 for Strategic Tourism implementation. Specific projects have not been identified for 2015
115 Strategic Tourism Implementation; a process will be identified later this year or early next year and will be
116 guided by the P&E Committee. The County's obligation to TCAD in 2015 is \$60,000. The Budget
117 Committee has recommended ACOD Grants, Beautification, Tourism Capital Grants, CAP, CVB and
118 Discovery Trail all at the target budgets. A small amount of funding above the targets of about \$11,000 will
119 allow these programs to stay at flat funding: Community Celebrations, Tourism Project Grants, Hospitality
120 Workforce Investment and New Tourism Initiative Grants. More support was recommended for the County
121 Historian, to \$7,500 from the current \$5,500. An allocation of \$900 was recommended for Board
122 Development, which will be administered through the County Planning Department.
123

124 **Comments on Recently Attended Events** – Ian Golden reported that the Cayuga Trails 50 was a
125 successful event with a turnout of about 350 and an average of 3 room night stays. He noted the trails
126 endured minimal impact and hopes to keep the event running yearly. Gary Ferguson praised Ian for having
127 the registrations downtown and promoting potential multi day experiences.
128

129 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:04pm.
130

131 Respectfully Submitted,
132 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant
133 Tompkins County Planning Department
134

135 **Next Meeting Scheduled**
136 Wednesday, July 16, 2014