

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

1 **Date:** September 17, 2014
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Cayuga Nature Center
 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>	✓	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
John Gutenberger	✓	Cornell	<i>Bruce Stoff</i>	✓	<i>CVB, Non-Voting</i>
Lynette Scofield	✓	Lodging	<i>Dwight Mengel</i>	A	<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>	✓	<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>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Anne Gossen	✓	At-Large	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Sue Stafford	✓	TC3	Jennifer Turner	✓	Staff
Christy Agnese	E	At-Large			

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8

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 10 **Also in attendance:** Ronda Roaring, De Murphy – Noble House, Bed and Breakfast of Greater Ithaca
 11

12 **Meeting Agenda**

- 13 Welcome to the Cayuga Nature Center – Robb Ross
 14 Privilege of the Floor
 15 July STPB Meeting Minutes
 16 Downtown Ithaca Project Updates Presentation – Gary Ferguson
 17 Chair's Report
 18 Staff Report
 19 CVB Report
 20 Annual TPA Designation
 21 Nominating Committee
 22 Membership and Bylaws Committee Report
 23 Task Force Reports
 24 Tour of Cayuga Nature Center
 25

26 **The meeting was called to order** at 3:03 PM.
 27

28 **July 2014 STPB meeting minutes** were approved with no changes.
 29

30 **Welcome to the Cayuga Nature Center** – Rob Ross, Associate Director for Outreach at the
 31 Paleontological Research Institution and Museum of Earth introduced himself and expressed gratitude to
 32 the Strategic Tourism Planning Board for their continued support. He went on to provide background on the
 33 collaboration of staff within the Cayuga Nature Center and the Museum of the Earth and related programs.
 34 Transitions at the center were noted; additional upgrades to the Cayuga Nature Center are ongoing. Earth
 35 Systems and Environmental Education were noted as local highlights with resources that include Cornell
 36 University, Ithaca College, The Sciencenter, The Children's Garden, and the Lab of Ornithology. The broad
 37 vision for the Cayuga Nature and the Museum for the Earth is to provide visitor attractions that are unusual
 38 and unique by providing an experience with high quality cutting edge technology and beautiful exhibits.
 39

40 **Privilege of the Floor** – Ronda Roaring of www.ilovethefingerlakes.com made suggestions to the STPB in
 41 to promote Ithaca as a destination to accommodate visitors for the upcoming International Lacrosse

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42 Championship in September of 2015. The Iroquois Confederacy will be hosting the event in Nedrow, New
43 York at the Onondaga Nation Arena. Also noted were the Finger Lakes Finns as a possible host to visitors
44 from Finland. There will be a number of games and 40 teams traveling from all over the country. More
45 information on the event: www.Iroquoisnationals.org
46

47 De Murphy of addressed the board on behalf of the Bed and Breakfast of Greater Ithaca. She shared the
48 group's concerns about illegal lodging vendors using AirBnB and other online sites to market properties.
49 She noted that between their association's 12 members, \$46,878 in room taxes were collected. She also
50 noted the Visitors Bureau's previously reported estimate of a loss of between \$37,000-45,000 each year in
51 uncollected room tax due to unregistered AirBnB hosts. She offered the services of the association to
52 provide education and outreach about the legal and regulatory requirements of providing lodging services in
53 Tompkins County.
54

55 Rick Adie noted the complexity of the issue on a national scale. The Economic Development Committee of
56 the Legislature has been made aware of the issue. Compliance with zoning and building codes are
57 enforced by surrounding municipalities, not Tompkins County, which makes it difficult for local government
58 to provide a coordinated response. A presentation will be brought to the Tompkins County Council of
59 Governments on October 23rd.
60

61 **July 2014 STPB meeting minutes** were approved with no changes.
62

63 **Downtown Ithaca Project Updates** - Gary Ferguson opened his presentation with an update on the
64 projects underway in downtown Ithaca. There are a total of 13 projects that are completed, underway, or
65 scheduled to be underway. Breckenridge Place, Argos Inn, Seneca Place, and Press Bay Alley are among
66 some of the completed projects. Re-construction of the Ithaca Commons is moving along as concrete is
67 being poured to start the process of the surface which will follow with pavers. The end of November is the
68 target goal for the completed base surface of the Ithaca Commons. Full completion of the Ithaca Commons
69 is projected for late spring of 2015. Other noted projects set for construction or in some stage of
70 development were noted as The Shalimar Building, Marriott Hotel, Harold's Square, Hotel Ithaca, Cayuga
71 Green II, Coltivare, Hampton Inn, and the new Business Incubator in the Carey Building. Members
72 questioned the parking accessibility downtown with all the new construction. A Transportation Demand
73 Management Program has been created with the goal of moving 400 people out of the parking system to
74 reduce the footprint of cars. The City of Ithaca and TCAT are constantly working on parking management.
75 For more information on downtown Ithaca contact: gary@downtownithaca.com
76

77 **Chair's Report** – Rick Adie reported that the Economic Development Committee's approved the 2015
78 tourism program budget to be forwarded to the full legislature for adoption in November. Christy Agnese's
79 efforts with the Wine Center deconstruction were noted as well underway as she continues the debriefing of
80 25 people involved with the project. A presentation will follow in October or November. The October
81 meeting will focus on review of the fall review of grants. Gavin Landry of the I Love New York Program will
82 give a presentation at the October Strategic Tourism Planning Board meeting.
83

84 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe reported that the Priority Trails Strategy was presented to the Legislature on
85 August 5th and the resolution accepting the document passed unanimously. Grant applications are due
86 Friday. Tompkins County has created a fact sheet and registration form on their website in effort to educate
87 and pursue the collection of the room tax. This required coordination with Tompkins County Assessment,
88 Finance, County Attorney, the CVB and the Planning Department. Special thanks went to Joseph
89 Rodriguez for creating a tool to assist in identifying street addresses of AirBnB hosts. A letter will go out
90 soon to AirBnB hosts in order to educate them on the county room tax law.
91

92 **CVB Monthly Report** – Bruce Stoff reported that the STR report for the month of July was record breaking
93 with numbers exceeding the previous record back in July of 2008. Occupancy rate is struggling due to the
94 supply of properties growing faster than demand. The chat button that was configured onto the webpage
95 was successful. Chats surpassed the phone calls and most chats were used for information regarding
96 booking rooms. 150 room nights were generated in one week for rooms that may have been booked
97 outside the county. VisitIthaca mobile sites were noted as overtaking the desktop websites in unique

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98 visitors. With the \$50,000 investment in a website planned for the near future, those numbers will be
99 revisited. The mid-week ad campaign is hoping to bring 300 room nights weekly.

100
101 **Annual TPA Designation** – A motion for the STPB to support the designation of the Tourism Promotion
102 Agency for the state between Tompkins County and the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce was
103 moved by Tom Knipe, seconded by Anne Kellerman and approved unanimously by voice vote.

104
105 **Nominating Committee** – Rick Adie, Anne Kellerman and Ken Jupiter agreed to have their names put
106 forward to serve on the 2014 Nominating Committee. Mike Mellor made the motion to appoint the
107 Nominating Committee, seconded by Stephen Nunley and approved unanimously by voice vote.

108
109 **Membership and Bylaws Committee Report** – Lynnette Scofield noted the need find a replacement for
110 Rick Adie in the lodging seat as well as Susie Monagan’s Arts & Culture seat, as Susie will replace Anthony
111 Hopson to represent Ithaca College. A press release has gone out and applications are due October 20th.

112
113 **Ag & Culinary tourism Task Force Report** - Rita Rosenberg reported that their Task Force met in July and
114 September. Preparations are being made for the Tompkins County Agri-Culinary Community Workshop that
115 will take place on November 10th from 6:00-8:30 at The Place at Greenstar. The main goal will be to focus on
116 turning Ithaca Tompkins County into a regional hub of culinary and agri-tourism. Questions will be focused
117 on potential strategies and actions that will go into the Implementation Plan which is being developed. Ethan
118 Ash touched on the outline of what the agri-tourism plan will look like and the feedback that will be required
119 to make sure that key elements are included. The restaurant industry was mentioned as a key component in
120 engagement for the plan’s development. Suggestions were made to members of the STPB to reach out for
121 participation in the workshop from community members, particularly with people in the restaurant industry.
122 The group has come up with a definition for local agri-culinary tourism represented by a Venn Diagram with
123 elements of farm-based, food-based, and beverage-based experiences. Crossovers between the different
124 elements were mentioned as a way to create unique experiences as all the elements tie together cohesively.
125 Lodging will be a key component in directing people to these experiences.

126
127 **Heritage Tourism Task Force** – Anne Gossen, Chair of the Heritage Tourism Task Force, reported that
128 their Committee met 3 times over the summer. She noted that original membership started with Stu Stein as
129 Chair and John Spence of CAP, Ian Golden of STPB, Tom Knipe of the Tompkins County Planning
130 Department, Alphonse Pieper of Historic Ithaca, Carol Kammen, Sherene Baugher, Jeff Chusid of Cornell,
131 and Baruch Whitehead of Ithaca College. The Task Force is at the brainstorming stage and will focus on
132 strengths, opportunities, challenges and research on best practices and national models. In the fall the
133 Heritage Taskforce will focus on creating an outline for a strategy document. By next year the Heritage
134 Tourism Taskforce will have a strategy document and recommended action steps.

135
136 **ACOD** – John Spence reported on a set of meetings of the special committee to review the Arts & Culture
137 Organizational Development (ACOD) Program. The funding was initiated 12 years ago to make the large
138 established tourism and audience generating arts organizations strong and healthy. He noted the application
139 received last year by Friends of Stewart Park raised questions to the panel as to the definition of culture and
140 eligibility for funding. The group is working to answer this question and also to tune the eligibility
141 requirements and the review process. The special committee has also discussed making the application
142 process clearer to applicants by having an applicant submit a letter of interest to establish eligibility before
143 submitting a full application. The group will continue meeting this fall and come forward with
144 recommendations soon. In 2016 there may be different application and review processes

145
146 **Announcements** – Sue Perlgut noted the Benefit for Planned Parenthood and the documentary she had
147 been working on regarding Constance Cook that will be featured at Cinnemapolis on November 19th at
148 7:30pm. Bruce Stoff noted the Annual Celebration of Tourism on November 12th from 6:00-8:00 pm at the
149 Americana Vineyards hosted by the B&B Association.

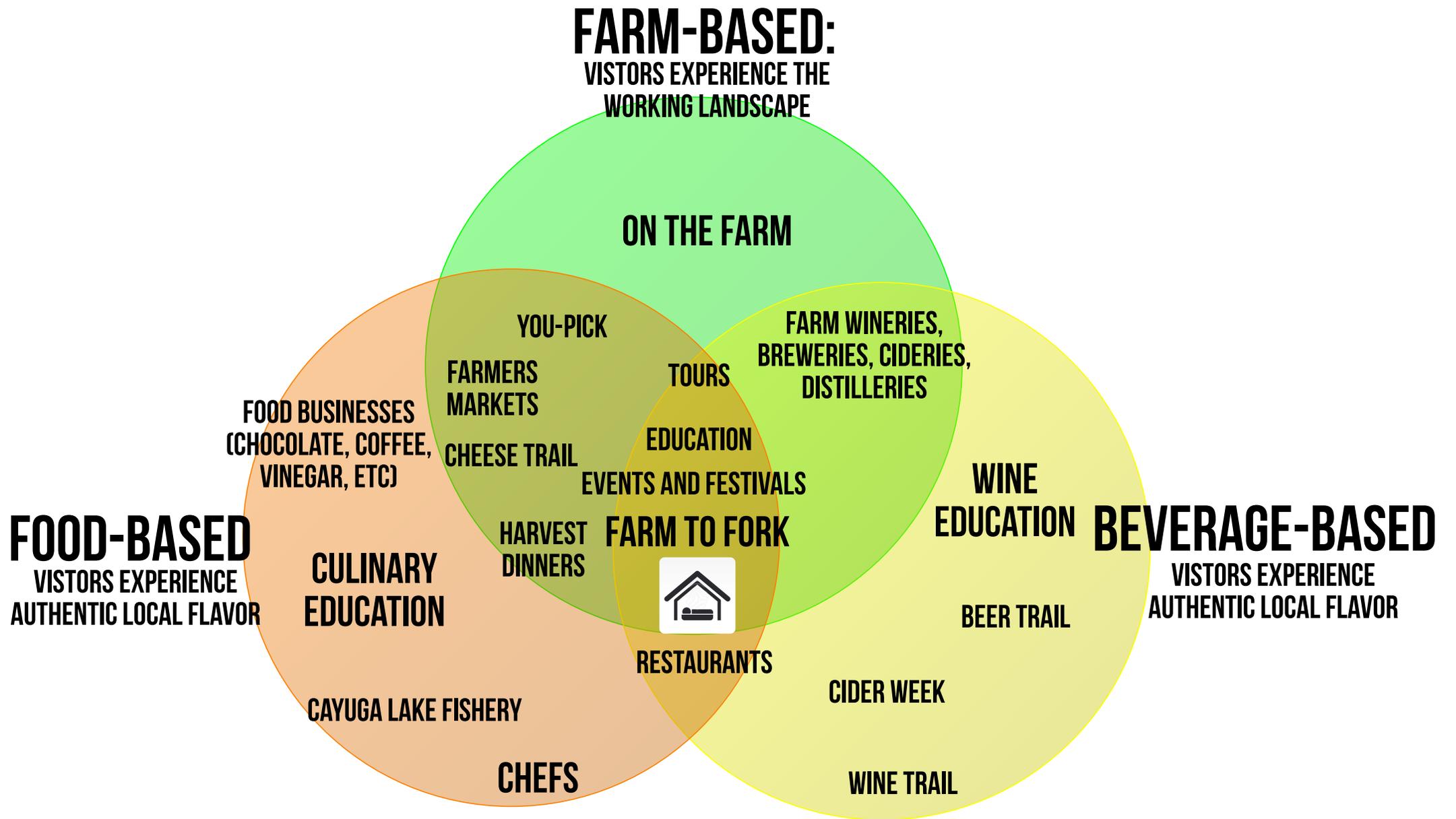
150
151 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:24pm. A tour of the Cayuga Nature Center followed.

152
153 Respectfully Submitted,
154 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant

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155 Tompkins County Planning Department
156
157 **Next Meeting Scheduled**
158 Wednesday October 15, 2014

DRAFT



TOMPKINS COUNTY AGRI-CULINARY TOURISM