

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Meeting Minutes – February 2012

Date: February 15, 2012
Time: 3:00-5:00pm
Location: Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large	Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Anthony Hopson	exc	Ithaca College, Vice-Chair	Sue Stafford	✓	TC3
Beverly Baker	✓	At-Large	Susie Monagan	✓	Arts-Culture
David Sparrow	✓	At-Large, Chair	Tim Joseph	✓	At-Large
Ethan Ash		Arts-Culture	Todd Miner		At-Large
Gary Stewart		Cornell	Brett Bossard	✓	CAP, Non-Voting
Jon Reis	✓	Arts-Culture	Carol Chock	exc	Legislature, Non-Voting
Ken Jupiter	✓	At-Large	Fred Bonn	✓	CVB, Non-Voting
Paul Tatar	exc	Recreation	Gary Ferguson		DIA, Non-Voting
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging	Jean McPheeters	✓	Chamber, Non-Voting
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture	Martha Armstrong	✓	TCAD, Non-Voting
Scott Wiggins	✓	Lodging	VACANT		Transportation, Non-Voting
Stuart Stein	✓	At-Large	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff

Also in attendance: Kathy Wilsea (Tompkins County Planning Dept.)

Agenda

1. Approval of minutes for January, 2012 STPB meeting
2. Chair's report
3. 2012 STPB meeting schedule and committee assignments – David Sparrow – 5 min
4. Annual conflict of interest disclosure – Tom Knipe
5. 2012 Tourism Capital Grant recommendations – Martha Armstrong – 30 min
6. Proposed STPB Bylaws changes – Beverly Baker – 20 min
7. Grant Evaluation Criteria – pre-review input – Tom Knipe – 10 min
 - o New Tourism Initiatives and Tourism Projects, tourism Marketing & Advertising
 - o Community Celebrations
8. CVB Report – Fred Bonn – 5 min
9. Strategic Tourism Plan Update – 5 min

Discussion

1. **Approval of minutes for January 2012 STPB meeting** – Draft minutes for the January meeting were accepted unanimously without change.
2. **Chair's report** – David Sparrow welcomed Rita Rosenberg, the new Agriculture representative. David asked Beverly Baker to report on the Beautification Committee. Beverly said they will meet again 2/28 for further examination of their plan and she will also report at the March STPB meeting. They have received some comments about the cottage garden look of plantings, so will have discussion on that and if anything can be done in the planting areas during winter. Jean McPheeters said they want to keep the tuning fork area in the best possible condition, since the Commons itself will be subject to a lot of construction over the next two years.
3. **2012 STPB meeting schedule and committee assignments** -- For 2012, PDEQ meetings will remain on the first Wednesday of the month, so STPB meetings will remain on the third Wednesday. David distributed committee assignments.
4. **Annual conflict of interest disclosure** – Tom Knipe passed out disclosure forms, spoke of the process, and asked for updates from members who have changes since last year.

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5. 2012 Tourism Capital Grant recommendations – Martha Armstrong reported there were eight applicants this round, which is a higher number than usual. Having made commitments for multi-year awards in the past, we now have \$54,000 available. The committee - which consisted of Tim Joseph, Ken Jupiter, Pam Mackesey, TCAD board members Howard Hartnett and Steve Snyder - was concerned about availability of resources to support capital projects already conditionally approved for funding in further years. They selected projects closest to concrete tourism outcomes, and some feasibility studies were not recommended for funding. Concerning multi-year funding, projects are evaluated annually because the applicant has obligations to meet before other payments are considered, and we need to make sure we have adequate funding. If the money were not used, it probably would go into next year's pool. Stu Stein pointed out that heritage tourism at the Eight-Square School House has been discussed for years. Rick Adie said the recaps were well done and useful. He would like information on all types of grants given to these applicants. He recalled that STPB had a prior grant to the State Theatre for restrooms, but others reported it was in 2003 for construction of the handicapped accessible bathroom. Tom agreed to provide histories by organization for the next round of grants. Motion by Stu Stein to pass the committee recommendations on to PDEQ and the County Legislature for funding. Seconded by Tim Joseph. With Scott Wiggins abstaining, motion passed by voice vote.

6. Proposed STPB Bylaws changes were postponed to the end of the meeting.

7. Grant Evaluation Criteria – Tom Knipe reviewed the materials that were distributed with the agenda. Marketing/Advertising has used criteria in the past, and Community Celebrations has used limited criteria. The scoring rubrics are a tool for decision making, not deterministic. For example, the scores are not weighted, and the committee may choose to emphasize certain factors over others in making their recommendations. Anne Kellerman said she has used scoring in the past and found it made decisions more consistent. Scott suggested making it clear that Community Celebrations are not about overnight stays. Brett Bossard recommended that the ROI category be changed to VOI (value on investment). Jon Reis asked if Tom screens applications to make sure they are for the appropriate category, and Tom said he does and also encourages applicants to contact him before applying. Tom will report to STPB this summer on possible changes to guidelines and how we seek applications. In response to a recommendation about adding a report column to the scoring rubric, Tom said he sees that as an administrative effort before the new application round before the new application round for applicants whose projects have been funded previously. Applicants who have failed to report satisfactorily on completed projects will be ineligible.

8. CVB report – Fred Bonn reported the temporary storage container outside CVB is for \$38,000 worth of classroom supplies donated by Staples for teacher gifts during Winter Recess registration. Winter Recess had some media coverage on Binghamton radio and TV when a local resident received an I-pad and \$1,000 Staples gift card. The Winter Recess goal is 450 room nights and 5,000 registrants. The new Travel Guide is at the printers, and will be unveiled 2/27 with a presentation for Tourism Partners at the Wine Center. Matching fund paperwork has been submitted to NYS. Other information was attached to the agenda. Several STPB members attended a City of Ithaca meeting on possible fees for special events. The City would charge festivals for police, DPW workers closing off street, etc. Ithaca Festival and Veterans Day parades would be grandfathered in and have no fees. No formal decisions have been made, and if fees go into effect they would begin in 2013. Fred felt comments at the meeting slowed the process down and will lead to discussion. Scott said some of the fees would be significant, and no events would be scheduled on public holidays. This will trickle down to our larger grant applications, and we need to examine that. Tom reported this would be an emergency fiscal policy for the City and subject to annual review.

9. Strategic Tourism Plan – Tom provided revised schedule with the agenda. A draft plan is scheduled for STPB review in April, discussion at PDEQ in May, and publication in July. He and Anne are winnowing down the comments from the community meeting. Workshop attendees and others will be invited to respond to an online survey, and the draft Plan will be publicized with a 20-day comment period. Anne and Stu pointed out we need to harness the ideas from the community workshop beyond adding a few to the Plan. Tom concurred and shared several initial ideas to be further developed by the Planning & Evaluation Committee.

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10. Proposed STPB Bylaws changes – David welcomed Will Burbank, 2012 chair of PDEQ. Beverly reported for the committee. They examined the bylaws for clarity and to address two major issues: associate members and term limits. Beverly moved to accept the committee's work as Draft Bylaws. During the discussion period, Beverly explained if the expiration of a voting member's current appointment makes a total of six or more years served, that member cannot be reappointed (can reapply after one year break, can serve as associate). This will allow us to cycle in new information, keep STPB healthy, support the sentiment favoring term limits revealed in the straw poll of Board members taken in 2009 and re-expressed by members recently, and respond to past comments of PDEQ members. There was also discussion on the language for associate representatives. Discussion yielded some language edits in the document. Scott seconded Beverly's motion, and it passed by unanimous voice vote to advance this draft. Members will have an opportunity to view the final language at the next STPB meeting before it is forwarded to PDEQ.

10. Announcements: Susie Monagan announced Light in Winter is going forward, and will coincide with State Theatre productions this weekend from Friday – Sunday. They want to keep the name out there while they decide on their future. Sue Perlgut announced performances of Peaches and Bird, a play at the Kitchen Theatre written by Carol Kammen and directed by herself. Beverly said the Community Foundation will honor Carol Kammen on 3/13. Stu Stein reported that The History Center has been made a partner of the Erie Canal Heritage Foundation partnership program. This will provide them with advisory resources, interaction with other groups, and recognition. Rick thanked Mary Rachun and Tom for the Tourism Partner Awards that were presented at the County Legislature meeting last week. Brett Bossard reported CAP has received funding from NYS Council of the Arts, and that will be going out to local grant recipients. Tom reminded members they have an opportunity to comment on the City of Ithaca draft Comprehensive Plan until 3/1. Sue Stafford said the TC3 Hospitality Training program is currently matching up students with training opportunities, and members should contact her if they want an intern.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:56pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department
Approved by STPB 3/21/2012

Next Meetings Scheduled

Wednesday, March 21 – 3pm – CVB
Wednesday, April 18 – 3pm – CVB