

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Meeting Minutes – February 2013

Date: February 20, 2013
Time: 3:00-5:00pm
Location: Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large	Stuart Stein	✓	At-Large
Anthony Hopson	E	Ithaca College	Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Christy Agnese	✓	At-Large	Sue Stafford	✓	TC3
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture	Susie Monagan	✓	Arts-Culture
Gary Stewart		Cornell	Tim Joseph	✓	At-Large
Jon Reis	✓	Arts-Culture	Brett Bossard	✓	CAP, Non-Voting
Miriam Musco	✓	At-Large	Fred Bonn	✓	CVB, Non-Voting
Paul Tatar	E	Recreation	Gary Ferguson	✓	DIA, Non-Voting
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging	Jean McPheeters	✓	Chamber, Non-Voting
Rita Rosenberg	E	Agriculture	Martha Armstrong	E	TCAD, Non-Voting
Scott Wiggins	E	Lodging	Will Burbank	✓	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Stephen Nunley	✓	At-Large	VACANT		Transportation, Non-Voting
Steve Hugo		At-Large	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff

Also in attendance: Carol Kammen (County Historian, Community Celebrations Chair), Jodi LaPierre (CVB), Jennifer Miller (local business owner, Tourism instructor at IC), Kristy Mitchell (CVB), Mary Rachun (CVB), Ronda Roaring (ilovethefingerlakes.com), Michael Schaff (guest of Sue Perlgut), Kathy Wilsea (Tompkins County Planning Dept.)

Agenda

Opener
 Approval of January Minutes
 CVB Annual Marketing Plan
 STPB Committee Assignments
 Tourism Grant Program Guidelines
 STPB Appointments
 STPB Letter of Support – STEP grant
 Announcements

Discussion

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 PM. New member Miriam Musco was welcomed and visitor introductions were made.

Opener -- An interactive exercise was conducted to help members get to know one another.

January 2013 minutes were approved unanimously with Christy Agnese marked as excused.

Chair's Report -- Rick Adie reported the Strategic Plan Implementation grants, as recommended by STPB last month, were approved by the Legislature's Economic Development Committee on 2/7 and by the Legislature last night on the consent agenda. Rick, Ken Jupiter and Tom Knipe attended the first Economic Development Committee meeting, where they heard the legislators were impressed with the quality of the applications for grants and said they also see many other items that need to receive support. On March 12, Beverly Baker will receive the Laura Holmberg award from the Tompkins County Community Foundation. STPB received thank you letters from the Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail for the paving stones dedicated to retiring members. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance presented an award to STPB for the Strategic Tourism Plan. Brett Bossard, Tom Knipe, Sue Perlgut and Rick met for a follow up discussion on the Ticket Center, based on last month's STPB meeting item. Brett will be organizing the discussion group of Ticket Center users, tourism professionals, and STPB members who volunteered last month. Five STPB associate members are being appointed: Beverly Baker, Ken Jupiter, Anne Gossen, Mike Mellor, and Tiffany

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Gallagher. An orientation session will be held for these associates and one new at-large member on March 19th at 3pm, with other STPB members welcome to attend. A retreat for STPB members will be held on Saturday, 4/20, at the Statler Hotel from 9:30am to 12:30pm. Members will discuss ways to advance the Strategic Plan.

CVB Annual Marketing Plan – Fred Bonn provided attendees with copies of the Travel Guide update, acknowledging Kristy Mitchell as the lead staff member for the update. Fred presented a slide show on tourism benefits, local growth, alignment of CVB goals with the STPB Strategic Tourism Plan, regional marketing and its target groups (by Kristy Mitchell), group sales (by Mary Rachun), visitor services (by Jodi LaPierre), NYS programs, and available data. He recommended to STPB members that they interact with tourists to turn them into travelers.

In the discussion period, Susie Monagan said it is season announcement time for theatres, and that means it's time for CVB to interact with them. She asked how the CVB interacts with hotels on sales tactics -- if hotels are seeing unexpected activity, can they tell us why? Fred said hotels consider their data proprietary information, but the new grant-funded Farm to Table program will include tracking systems. Ethan Ash said the best way to track is to generate a lead. Share some info with hotels if they will share results. Ask website visitors about their specific interests. Kristy said they are doing some of this segmentation now. Anne Kellerman asked if there are any specific goals to help fill rooms of the new hotels. Nothing specific was reported.

Membership – Sue Perlgut said the committee members who conducted interviews in the fall have conferred about filling the vacancy that will be caused by Tim Joseph's resignation. The committee recommends appointment of Angela LaPadula, who is willing to take the seat. The committee also recommends appointing Dwight Mengel to the vacant non-voting Transportation seat. With the report constituting a recommendation, STPB members voted unanimously to support the recommendations. The voting member appointment recommendation will move on to the Economic Development Committee and the County Legislature.

Committee Assignments – A chart was provided with the agenda. Rick reviewed committees and chairs, and asked the chairs to briefly describe the work of each committee. Most is carryover of previous activities. Planning & Evaluation will bring implementation of Strategic Tourism Plan goals and action items into their work. Stu Stein would like the festivals committee to consider establishing a grant program for festivals. The Beautification Program will coordinate the Strategic Tourism Plan implementation grant for the Wayfinding project.

Tourism Grant Program Guidelines – Tom Knipe provided Evaluation Criteria in a handout and reviewed the recommendations for change, noting some will need board action at a future date. He recently conducted a workshop for grant applicants, with about 50 participants. Tom met with Jon Reis and Ken Jupiter about the criteria, too. They tried to bring the Strategic Tourism Plan into the guidelines and ask if applicants are addressing an action item from the Plan. The electronic application has been welcomed by applicants, and will have space to invite more comments and have applicants provide a marketing plan where applicable. Applicants can apply for multiple programs simultaneously now. Tom will work with the STPB officers on some policy questions.

Jean McPheeters asked if the questions on the Implementation Grant application about alignment with the Strategic Tourism Plan were useful to reviewers. She spent a lot of time reviewing action items for inclusion in the Wayfinding application. Anne asked if, when Jean was putting together the application, she felt the Plan was well written? Jean said she was so close to the process she couldn't tell. Tim reported the review committee had mixed reactions, and he distilled it to the applicant shouldn't spend so much time on answering the question about Strategic Tourism Plan Implementation, not that the question shouldn't be asked. Going through the process made him think the Plan had far-from-equal goals, and we could use some focus on the top five. Tom said the review teams will have to work on this and be clear on how they are interpreting this criterion when bringing forward their recommendations. Rick pointed out the Plan has short-, medium- and long-range goals. More discussion will occur after the grant round.

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Letter of Support – STEP Grant – Tom distributed a draft letter of support for the City concerning NYS Department of Transportation STEP funding for development of Phase Two of the Black Diamond Trail. He considered the project similar to our support of the Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail and this connection will help bring about trail links. The consensus was to have Rick provide his signature.

Announcements – Ethan Ash: Cinemapolis is having their annual gala fundraiser on Sunday, when participants can watch the Oscars on the big screen at the theatre.
Brett Bossard: Lynn Johnson, a National Geographic photographer, will present her work tomorrow evening at Ithaca College.
Fred Bonn: He will be making the same marketing & advertising presentation on Tuesday to tourism partners.
Gary Ferguson: More than 15,000 people were downtown on Saturday for the Chili Cookoff.
Stephen Nunley: On March 23 the Kitchen Theatre will hold their Dance the Night Away anniversary event.
Jean McPheeters: On March 4 the Kitchen Theater will host a fundraiser for the Food Bank of the Southern Tier with New York Times food writer Mark Bittman.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department

Approved by STPB on March 20, 2013

Next Meetings Scheduled

Wednesday, March 20 – 3pm
Wednesday, April 17 – 3pm