

MINUTES  
 Strategic Tourism Planning Board  
 March 30, 2011 3:00 pm – Sciencenter

PRESENT: Jon Reis, Scott Wiggins, Tim Joseph, Ken Jupiter, Todd Miner, Brett Bossard, Marrie Neumer, Rick Adie, Beverly Baker, Susie Monagan, Debbie Teeter, Paul Tatar, Stu Stein, Anne Kellerman, David Sparrow, and Martha Armstrong

GUEST: Kris Lewis, Operations Manager Downtown Ithaca Alliance

**1. Chair's Report – David Sparrow**

- David Sparrow welcomed Tim Joseph and Anne Kellerman, new members of the STP board.
- David reported that the interview process is continuing for the STPB staff position.
- The February minutes will be circulated and voted on in April.

**2. Community Celebrations – Stu Stein**

Stu reported that while Carol Kammen, County Historian, is the chair of the Community Celebrations grants committee, he is a committee member and is filling in for her to deliver this report. He discussed the following applications:

Applicant	Event	Recommend
City of Ithaca	2011 Congo Square Market	\$1,000
<b>committee recom'd \$0, STPB recom'd \$1,000</b>		
Town of Newfield	2011 Newfield Bicentennial Celebration	\$2,000
Town of Groton, hamlet of McLean	2011 McLean's Happening in the Hamlet	\$1,300
City of Ithaca	2011 Tomp. Co. Veterans Day Parade	\$1,000
Town of Dryden	2011 Dryden Lake Festival	\$1,500
City of Ithaca	GIAC Community Festival- A Cultural Fusion	\$1,000

Town of Lansing	2011 East Shore Festival of the Arts	\$1,765
Town of Enfield	2011 Enfield Harvest Festival	\$1,800
City of Ithaca	Annual Latino Heritage Month Celebration 2011	\$1,500
Town of Dryden	Recreational Summer Movie Series	\$0
Village of Trumansburg	2011 Tru-Ulysses Winter Festival	\$1,500
Town of Danby	Danby Fun Day 2011	\$800
Village of Trumansburg	Community Outdoor Movie Night Series	\$0
Town of Lansing	Ludlowville Park "unplugged" Concert Series	\$1,000
Village of Groton	2011 Groton Winterfest	\$600
Village of Groton	2011 Groton Olde Home Days	\$1,500
City of Ithaca	2011 Juneteenth African American Heritage Celebration	\$1,000
City of Ithaca	2011 Boricua Afro Americano Festival (Puerto Rican Festival)	\$1,700
		<b>\$20,965</b>
left for Fall round:		<b>\$5,635</b>

Question: One member asked for the distinction between a celebration, community event, and festival, since there is a mix of them within the applications. Stu reported that the STPB Festivals Committee is currently working to define these as they work with Vicki Taylor (Downtown Ithaca Alliance) on creating a strategic plan for festivals and events.

Question: Another member asked about the series of markets and movies. The movie series requests didn't seem to fit the grant criteria.

Comments about Congo market: two members noted that youth are being taught sustainability, farming, and marketing in this market. It was noted that the application was absent of conveying history to the audience, which is emphasized in the grant guidelines. At the Chair's invitation, Tim Joseph made a motion, seconded by Scott

Wiggins, that the Congo Square Market celebration be supported at the level of \$1,000. The board voted 7-6 in favor of granting \$1,000 to the 2011 Congo Market grant request, while one member abstained from voting.

The board voted unanimously in favor of the grant recommendations as presented otherwise.

### 3. Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants- Ken Jupiter

Ken presented the grants, as follows:

Hangar Theatre	2011 Hangar Theatre Year-Round Regional Marketing	\$5,000
Cayuga Nature Center	2011 CNC website enhancements	\$5,000
PRI and its Museum of the Earth	2011 Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway	\$4,250
Cayuga Lake Triathlon	2012 Cayuga Lake Triathlon	\$4,000
Downtown Ithaca Alliance	2011 Tompkins County Restaurant Week	\$3,000
Downtown Ithaca Alliance	2011 Downtown Ithaca Winter Festival	\$3,000
The History Center	2011 Ithaca Scottish Games & Celtic Festival	\$1,500
Center for Environmental Sustainability	Earthdance 2011	\$0
		\$25,750
	<b>left for Fall round</b>	<b>\$24,949</b>

He discussed the criteria: Out of County, packaging, marketing plan, season, audience, synergy w/ CVB, ability to deliver, and gut reaction

QUESTION: Why is the History Center applying for the Scottish Games; is there some historical connection? Answer: one of the organizers works for both, and it is legitimate for a non-profit to sponsor an event.

COMMENT: The Scottish games are the same weekend a summer drop-off at Cornell; would like to see coordination of dates of events.

QUESTION: On the Restaurant Week promotion – whom else is funding? Downtown Ithaca Alliance is taking the lead on coordination, especially since the restaurants do not have a coordinator. Note, in the tourism initiative grant, it shows a restaurant match.

COMMENT: CNC and all of the organizations need to package with more than one hotel.

CONFLICT: Tim noted his conflict of interest with the Cayuga Lake Triathlon since it takes place at one of the State Parks, so Tim abstained from voting.

The board voted unanimously in favor of the recommendations as presented, with one abstention.

#### **4. Downtown Ithaca Alliance (Ambassador's Program) – Kris Lewis**

Kris distributed a March 2011 Downtown Hospitality Ambassador Program March Summary, which included:

- Background
- Staff
- Materials
- Visitors Information
- Most common questions asked at the Kiosk
- Chart of visitation by month to the Downtown Ithaca Kiosk

Visitors seem to like that the ambassadors are connected to the internet to help answer questions. Their activities include

- Providing concierge service outdoors
- Utilizing Downtown Dollars
- Answering many questions from parents and students
- Answering the most popular questions: What to do, where to eat, where to stay
- Providing maps, especially Cornell and bicycle maps

Many questions and inquiries include

- Interest in concert series
- Wineries
- Where can one swim, access the lake

QUESTION: Is there a possibility of rotating lifeguards between the City and state parks? Kris responded that she is not a City employee and couldn't answer that

question. Tim noted that there is a bigger problem finding a lifeguard than affording it, especially finding training.

QUESTION: Are there activities that would encourage overnight stays? Answer: The Wine Center will definitely fill a void in the desire to visit the wineries. They would also love to have a concert every night, or theatre production.

QUESTION: Is there a duplication of efforts between DIA and downtown visitors center? ANSWER: DIA supporting downtown, whereas visitors center is supporting the entire county. Also, the visibility of cart is easier to find than the visitors center.

### **5. Carried over from the Fall 2010 Tourism Project Grants- Jon Reis**

Revisited from the Fall 2010 Tourism Project Grant round: 2011 Finger Lakes International Dragon Boat Festival application. While the application was submitted in the fall, it contained outdated information and the group was asked to resubmit their grant.

The Tourism Projects Grants Committee recommend an award \$16,517.

COMMENTS: Volunteers run it, and surveying is done in the parking lots. While Vicki Taylor exerted a great deal of her personal time to help make the 2010 event possible, they need guidance on tracking audience, and would like to encourage more vendors. Vicki Taylor is developing tools that all events can share to count people at all events.

In the future recommend including funding for counting out of town visitors - for hiring grad students or others to carefully count overnight stays.

The board voted unanimously in favor of the recommendation as presented. - \$16,517.

### **6. Tourism Project Grant- Jon Reis**

Jon presented the grant recommendations:

The History Center	2011 Ithaca Scottish Games & Celtic Festival	\$15,000
Downtown Ithaca Alliance	2011 Downtown Ithaca Winter Festival	\$15,000
The Ithaca Shakespeare Company	2011 Summer Season: The Ithaca Shakespeare Company	\$11,000
Cayuga Nature Center	2011 Enhance animal enclosures and develop new signage	\$7,000

PRI & its Museum of the Earth	2011 Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway	\$4,000
		\$52,000
available:		\$62,017
left for Fall round:		\$10,017

QUESTION: Does the Ithaca Shakespeare Company attract overnight guests?

ANSWER - they wrote in their application that they could verify 10% of their audience stayed overnight at hotels/B&Bs, with a total of 3,000 in total attendance.

COMMENT: Would like to see 5 year plan for PRI & CNC, and perhaps the other groups, and see information presented from one person for all of application requests.

ANSWER: Often the long- term plans are presented in Tourism Capital grants and ACOD grants.

The board voted unanimously in favor of the recommendations as presented.

### **7. New Tourism Initiative Grants – Jon Reis**

Jon presented the following recommendations

Finger Lakes Wine Center	Finger Lakes Wine 101: Archival Data Base Development and Implementation	\$24,000
Ithaca Motion Picture Project	Silent Film Exhibition 2011	\$13,000
Hangar Theatre	2nd Winter Village Bluegrass Festival <b>Committee rec'd \$12,000</b> <b>STPB tabled for discussion</b>	\$0
Downtown Ithaca Alliance	Restaurant Week in Tompkins County 2011-2013	\$5,000
Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County	2011-2012 Harvest Dinners on the Farm- Wine, Dine, Stay, & Play	\$5,000
The History Center	2011 West End Waterfront Rhiner Festival <b>Committee rec'd \$4,000</b> <b>STPB rec'd \$2,000</b>	\$2,000
Community Arts Partnership	2011 Spring Writes: The Finger Lakes Literary Festival <b>Committee rec'd \$2,500,</b> <b>STPB rec'd \$4,000</b>	\$4,000
GreenStar Community Projects	2011 Food Justice and Sustainability Conference, Walk-a-Thon, & Block Party	\$0
		\$53,000
available:		\$62,015
left:		<b>\$9,015</b>

QUESTION: The Finger Lakes Wine Center: Who is establishing the objectives; something similar was done unsuccessfully in Napa Valley. ANSWER: the director is forward-thinking with a strong board of directors; plus, the project is developing to

include diversity and a useful, timeless abundance of information for its mission and community education.

QUESTION: Winter Village Bluegrass Festival: The use grant is to hire nationally-known bands: why is this different than if the State Theatre or any other organization applied for talent grants? ANSWER: It is expressed within the grant guidelines that hiring “bigger” talent that would likely attract a larger, overnight audience is an allowable expense. The board did not seem comfortable with this ask.

The board voted to table the 2<sup>nd</sup> Winter Village Bluegrass Festival decision, 11-1, while Scott and David abstained from voting.

The Rhiner Festival seemed like a local celebration with no out-of-town visitor appeal. The Board voted in favor of granting \$2,000 to the request, which is alignment with the Community Celebration grant ceiling. The board voted unanimously in favor of the amendment.

QUESTION about 2011 Spring Writes: the funding goes talent just as the Bluegrass application. Is there a distinction between the two. ANSWER: Yes, the Spring Writes talent are local. Also, there was a question about tracking last year’s visitors. The board voted funding at \$4000. The board voted 12-1, with one abstention.

COMMENT: Advise GreenStar on how to apply and extend its efforts to visitors.

The board voted in favor of the recommendations as presented with amendments, while one abstained.

QUESTION: Should the Congo Market application go back to the committee for reconsideration? The board eventually decided to move it on to PDEQ as voted upon.

## **8. Planning and Evaluation Committee Report- David Sparrow**

David reported that the committee is working in a variety of areas focus groups in new areas of such as sustainability, sports, niche markets, etc. He expects that the reports will be brought forward within a month or two to STPB.

## **9. Adjournment**

The board adjourned at 5:20 pm.