

AGENDA –April 18, 2012

Strategic Tourism Planning Board Tompkins County

Wednesday, April 18, 2012
3:00pm, CVB

Agenda

- March Meeting Minutes - 2 minutes
- Chair's Report – David Sparrow - 5 minutes
- Bylaws update and discussion – Anthony Hopson – 10 minutes
- Budget Committee Report – Rick Adie - 5 minutes
- Strategic Tourism Plan Draft - facilitated discussion – 40 minutes
- February CVB Report – Fred Bonn – 5 minutes

Attached (agenda packet):

1. March, 2012 draft STPB meeting minutes
2. Strategic Tourism Plan Draft (to be sent separately)
3. March CVB Report



MISSION:

The Strategic Tourism Planning Board is charged by the Tompkins County Legislature with providing oversight and strategic direction for tourism initiatives that *promote economic development* and *enhance the quality of life* in Tompkins County.

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

Date: March 21, 2012
Time: 3:00-5:00pm
Location: Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	Exc	At-Large	Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Anthony Hopson	✓	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	Brett Bossard	✓	CAP, Non-Voting
Gary Stewart		Cornell	Fred Bonn	✓	CVB, Non-Voting
Jon Reis	✓	Arts-Culture	Gary Ferguson	✓	DIA, Non-Voting
Ken Jupiter	✓	At-Large	Jean McPheeters	✓	Chamber, Non-Voting
Paul Tatar	Exc	Recreation	Martha Armstrong		TCAD, Non-Voting
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging	Will Burbank		Legislature, Non-Voting
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture	VACANT		Transportation, Non-Voting
Scott Wiggins	✓	Lodging	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Stuart Stein	Exc	At-Large	Pat Pryor	✓	Legislature, Alternate

Also in attendance: Pat Pryor (County Legislator, alternate for Will Burbank), Kathy Wilsea (Tompkins County Planning Dept.)

Agenda

1. Approval of minutes for February, 2012 STPB meeting
2. Chair's report
3. Bylaws Vote – Beverly Baker
4. 2013 Tourism Program budget timeline
5. Spring 2012 Tourism Grant Recommendations
6. February CVB Report
7. The Ticket Center
8. Strategic Tourism Plan survey tutorial

Discussion

Approval of minutes for February 2012 meeting – The draft minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote without change.

Chair's report -- David Sparrow announced the recommended ACOD and Capital Project grants were approved by PDEQ and the County Legislature. Bylaws vote was postponed until the required 2/3 of voting members are present.

Budget Timeline – Rick Adie provided a handout of the proposed schedule, which includes presentation to PDEQ in July. Rick pointed out the upcoming renovations of the Holiday Inn will have a big impact on room tax income projections, but Fairfield Inn will be opening during that time period. David announced that Todd Miner has resigned from STPB and asked anyone willing to replace Todd on the Budget Committee to please let him know.

Spring 2012 Tourism Grant Recommendations – Tom Knipe provided background information, which included details of outreach and information on changes to the application. The switch to a stated preference for electronic submission was successful, with 59 out of 62 applications being submitted electronically. Tom worked with many applicants to fine-tune their submissions. He provided a five-year history for committees to refer to. The overall number of applications increased 55%, which made for harder decisions. Community Celebrations is the only group that left some money for a fall round. Some members pointed out they would have to abstain due to affiliation with sponsoring organizations.

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New Tourism Initiative Grants – Jon Reis noted they could not fund all requests and, through use of a scoring rubric, recommend partial or full funding for 10 of the 12 applications. He reviewed the projects and answered members' questions. Jon would like to incorporate some kind of stewardship for new applicants to see if they need help making their event a success. Sue Perlgut suggested requesting an interim report every 90 days. Voice vote on slate: yes 10, no 0, abstentions 2 (Hopson and Wiggins).

Bylaws -- With 2/3 of voting members present at this time, Bylaws were addressed. Beverly Baker moved to accept the changes that were distributed to members prior to the meeting, which incorporate discussion from the February meeting. Voice vote: passed unanimously, and will proceed to PDEQ and the County Legislature.

Return to Spring Grant Recommendations – Tourism Project Grants – Jon Reis said this group also requested far more than STPB had in the budget. Because of the number of members who would need to abstain, project grant recommendations were addressed individually:

- Cayuga Nature Center, Great Hall Exhibition, phase II: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- Downtown Ithaca Alliance, Winter Festival: yes 11, no 0, abstention 1 (Hopson)
- Ithaca Children's Garden Bulb Labyrinth (Jon pointed out this is a project that could be constructed in phases with multiple years of partial funding): yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- Ithaca Shakespeare Co Summer Season: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- PRI Did Dinosaurs Poop?: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- Social Ventures, Int'l Dragon Boat Festival (now two days): yes 10, no 0, abstentions 2 (Perlgut, Joseph)
- History Center Birth of Moog Synthesizer: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- History Center Scottish Games & Celtic Festival (different weekend from Dragon Boat Festival): yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- T C Public Library Foundation: IthaCasts Greek and Roman Plaster Casts: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0 [note this item was for zero funding]
- T C Public Library Foundation: 2013 The Hip Hop Experience: yes 10, no 1 (Sparrow), abstention 1 (Monaghan)

Marketing and Advertising Grants – Ken Jupiter said this budget was closer to the amount of the requests, in part because there is a limit of \$5,000. Many of the applicants have received M&A grants in prior rounds, and some are also currently applying for Project Grants. Four of the 16 applications were for web upgrades. All applicants need to coordinate with CVB, which will produce a set of guidelines for web upgrades that recipients will be required to follow; also those marketing anything to do with wine will be asked to coordinate with the Finger Lakes Wine Center. Voice vote on slate: yes 11, no 0, abstention 1 (Hopson). [Voting member Scott Wiggins left at this time.]

Community Celebrations Grants – Tom Knipe reported for the committee, noting there were many more applications than before, and some were new applicants. Although many were for "classic" events, others for were projects that expand the traditional definition of a Community Celebration. This will be discussed further in April to better define the types of events that are eligible. Applicants no longer are required to provide a letter of support from the municipality, but must give them a copy of their plans. Vote on slate: yes 11, no 0, abstention 0.

February CVB Report – Fred Bonn provided some material with the agenda. He reviewed the successful Winter Recess event, noting 74% of participants indicated they intend to return. Events are needed mid-week and during the second weekend to draw more room nights. NYS matching funds have been received. The new Travel Guide is out. Fred reported one page of advertising was inadvertently dropped, and he is working on how to trade off that loss with other products for advertisers. The Guide designers are helping with the cost of those trades. The Ithaca College pool is scheduling more regional events. Susie Munoz has left the CVB and the job description will be rewritten and advertised. In terms of numbers for February, room occupancy was up 12% over February 2011, average daily rate up 6%, and overall revenue up 18.7%. Jean McPheeters announced Tim Tebow has signed with the NY Jets, which would be big for Cortland and Tompkins counties by bringing media attention and room nights.

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The Ticket Center – Brett Bossard announced that the Ticket Center was close to finalizing a new partnership with the State Theatre. The State has been separate from the Ticket Center for six years, and the new arrangement will consolidate online ticket sales with one company and allow State Theatre tickets to be sold through the Ticket Center. The State will retain its own box office, but will now have expanded box office capabilities through The Ticket Center. The Ticket Center has been subsidized by the Tourism Program and by CAP for much of its existence; this new partnership will greatly expand its gross volume of ticket sales which should allow the Ticket Center to become self-sustaining within the next several years.

Strategic Tourism Plan survey tutorial – The survey will close Monday evening 3/26. P&E will meet during the first week of April to analyze survey results and develop preliminary goal and action priorities for the plan. Discussion at STPB on 4/18 will center on finalizing draft priorities. Tom showed how to proceed through the survey and encouraged members to share the link to the survey. Over 60 responses had been received to date.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Dept.

Next Meetings Scheduled

Wednesday, April 18 – 3pm

Wednesday, May 16 – 3pm



**Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)
Report to:
Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
April 18, 2012
Submitted by: Fred Bonn, Director**

MARKET UPDATE

Ithaca College A&E Center – The new A&E Center at Ithaca College continues to draw significant events to our community. Most notably is the fact that recently it was announced that the 2013 **NYS YMCA State Swim Championship** will be held here March 15 & 16, 2013. We have met with the host team organizers at the Cortland YMCA to discuss services that we can offer. We have also helped dozens of teams from across the state secure room blocks.

Holiday Inn Renovations / Expansion – Jean and I met with David Hart early this month to learn about plans for the Holiday Inn renovation / expansion. The project has grown and, in addition to the current ballroom, a second ballroom able to accommodate 425 is planned as well as the relocation of their restaurant to the front of the building and a roof-top reception area/bar on the new tower. The construction will begin on Nov. 26 with the property closed for approx. 6 mos while the current tower, current ballroom, lobby area and kitchen are all renovated. The hotel will reopen with 80 rooms in April/May of 2013 with a grand opening of all the new spaces +/- 12 mos. later.

Courtyard by Marriott Renovations – The Courtyard will be undergoing renovations to their property beginning in November and continuing until April, 2013. Approx. 20 rooms will be off-line on a rotating basis during the renovations.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Spring Advertising Campaigns – our spring advertising campaigns have or are in the process of launching. They include a series of print ads in Family Circle, More, Better Homes and Garden, Ladies Home Journal, Midwest Living, New York Times and National Geographic. Radio underwriting has begun on WXPB and will launch shortly on WXXI (Roc.) and WBFO (Buffalo). Television spots have started in Rochester and we're still in the process of negotiating about running spots in Buffalo. (there was a +/- 20% rate increase from last fall for the BFLO market)

Integrated Marketing Position – I am in the process of writing up a position description for a new position at the CVB. With the departure of our Web and Publications Manager my staff and I are looking at how we can do some re-organization and re-tasking of responsibilities which would allow us to create this new position.

Facebook.com/VisitIthaca Girlfriends Get-Away Contest – Many thanks to LaTourelle and Experience the Finger Lakes Tours for assisting us with this contest. We had over 400 entries. The winners will be staying at LaTourelle April 13 – 15, touring wineries, getting spa treatments.

2012 Travel Guide Errors - I have negotiated successfully with each of the advertisers who had their advertisement dropped from the 2012 Travel Guide by mistake.

GROUP SALES

Active America China – We will be attending a very targeted appointment based group tour conference in Minneapolis in May. Active America China will provide us an opportunity to meet with high end tour companies from China that are interested in touring US Cities that are home to major universities. We are working cooperatively with The Corning Museum of Glass, who is experience with these groups and is already a major draw for the China Market, to develop two and three day tour packages that would be based in Ithaca.

Empire State Society of Assoc. Executives – We attend this tradeshow every year to meet with meeting and event planners for associations primarily based in the Albany area. This year however, based on reduced attendance and lower return on investment, we will be scaling back our presence. The event organizers have promised to re-tool this show for 2013.

September Familiarization Tour for Group Tour Companies – We will be holding a three day tour for motor coach tour operators that we've been developing working relationships with over the last two years. Wine, waterfalls, theatre, Discovery Trail and a dine-around on the Commons are in the works.

VISITOR SERVICES

Hospitality Star Customer Service Training Program – Dates for this annual hospitality frontline staff customer service training have been set for June 19 and 20. The program is free to Tompkins County tourism related businesses and organizations. Please speak with me if you or any of your staff are interested in attending.

Requests for Information – We are seeing a dramatic increase in the number of requests for travel information in our office with weekly requests up between 75% and 100% over last year. If this trend continues we may need to look at a budget adjustment to cover postage expense.

REGIONAL UPDATE –

There is nothing significant to report on this month.

NEW YORK STATE TOURISM

M. Silver and Associates – this NYC PR agency was named the agency of record for I Love NY. Bruce Stoff and were part of a Finger Lakes Regional TPA meeting earlier in the month to meet with the team from M. Silver.

EARNED MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS – attached to my report are clippings from recent media stories that our office has had a hand in.

Smith Travel Report for Tompkins County – February, 2012

Occupancy (%)	2012	Year To Date	
	Feb	2011	2012
This Year	51.5	42.2	47.3
Last Year	47.8	44.2	42.2
Percent Change	7.9	-4.4	11.9

Demand	2012	Year To Date	
	Feb	2011	2012
This Year	22,285	38,484	43,075
Last Year	20,658	40,257	38,484
Percent Change	7.9	-4.4	11.9

ADR	2012	Year To Date	
	Feb	2011	2012
This Year	121.71	109.86	116.50
Last Year	114.28	100.45	109.86
Percent Change	6.5	9.4	6.0

Revenue	2012	Year To Date	
	Feb	2011	2012
This Year	2,712,246	4,227,903	5,018,118
Last Year	2,360,768	4,043,678	4,227,903
Percent Change	14.9	4.6	18.7

Ithaca / Tompkins County CVB Dashboard – February 2012

Visitor Information Services – March 2012

Requests for information fulfilled in March: 3669 ,
up 431% over 2011

YTD Requests for information through March: 5473,
up 255% over 2011

Visitor Info. Center Traffic - March
 East Shore Drive: 374 (up 8.4 % over 2011)
 Downtown: 261 (up 22% over 2011)

VisitIthaca.com Stats - Feb. 2012 & YTD Feb. 2012

March 2012			
Visits	26561	25137	5.66%
Pageviews	98958	98052	0.90%
Pages/Visit	3.73	3.9	-4.50%
Avg. Time on Site	3:52	3:48	1.80%
YTD March 2012			
Visits	67,439	65122	3.57%
Pageviews	244728	246,434	-0.69%
Pages/Visit	3.63	3.78	-4.20%
Avg. Time on Site	3:45	3:35	4.65%

Facebook – as of 3/14/12

- Lifetime “Likes” – **8,809 (+1,800 since March)**

Group Sales – March. 2012

Leads Distributed	8
Prospects Generated	3
Sales Kits Distributed	0
Prospects converted to Leads	2
Groups Assisted/Serviced	4
Site Visits Conducted	2

Group Sales Lead Status Report – March 2012

Lead sent date	Event account	Event status	Event start date	Event end date	Total Requested Room Nights	Multiplier	Economic Impact	Source
3/16/2012	Congressional Campaign Workers Block	Definite	3/26/2012	7/1/2012	392	118	\$46,256.00	Accommodation Referral
2/16/2012	InterTek	Booked	4/23/2012	4/28/2012	300	260	\$78,000.00	Accommodation Referral
11/21/2011	Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training	Booked	4/30/2012	5/3/2012	40	260	\$10,400.00	Email Request
4/26/2011	Institute for Traffic Safety Management & Research Walk/Bike Conference	Postponed by organizer	5/1/2012	5/2/2012	100	260	\$26,000.00	ESSAE
9/7/2010	Executive Board Meeting	Lost	5/2/2012	5/4/2012	140	260	\$36,400.00	CVB Generated
5/12/2011	Brett Larson Tour Group	Booked	5/8/2012	5/10/2012	75	353	\$26,475.00	ABA
9/12/2011	National Club Baseball Association	Awaiting Client Response	5/10/2012	5/12/2012	300	260	\$78,000.00	Connect
4/3/2012	Regional Partnerships for Equity Conference	Lead	5/18/2012	5/19/2012	50	260	\$13,000.00	CU Referral
8/17/2011	Pharmacists Society of the State of NY	Lost	5/30/2012	6/2/2012	175	260	\$45,500.00	ESSAE
10/6/2011	Rochester Chrome Divas	Booked	6/1/2012	6/2/2012	20	260	\$5,200.00	Call-in
3/9/2012	Rochester Chrome Divas	Re-issue	6/1/2012	6/2/2012	20	260	\$5,200.00	Email Request
10/25/2011	UCMA Spring 2012 Conference	Tentative	6/6/2012	6/7/2012	40	260	\$10,400.00	Repeat Business
2/17/2012	Germano Wedding	Booked	6/8/2012	6/9/2012	20	353	\$7,060.00	Local Referral
2/29/2012	Road Scholar	Definite	6/11/2012	6/14/2012	60	260	\$15,600.00	Repeat Business
10/26/2010	MTA Gathering	Lost - lack of participation	6/18/2012	6/21/2012	240	260	\$62,400.00	Email Request
2/17/2012	Pittsburgh Motorcoach Group	Tentative	7/10/2012	7/11/2012	52	353	\$18,356.00	ABA
11/29/2011	Wechsler Wedding	Booked	7/13/2012	7/14/2012	100	353	\$35,300.00	Call-in
4/5/2012	Hunter Wedding	Lead	7/13/2012	7/14/2012	30	353	\$10,590.00	Accommodation Referral
10/25/2011	Taggart Wedding Reception/Guest Rooms	Booked	7/21/2012	7/22/2012	200	353	\$70,600.00	Local Referral
12/6/2011	Klippel Wedding	Booked	8/9/2012	8/10/2012	40	353	\$14,120.00	Call-in

1/12/2012	Barnes Wedding	Booked	8/17/2012	8/18/2012	200	353	\$70,600.00	Local Referral
7/26/2008	CSEA Retiree Delegates Conference 2012	Lost - lack of meeting space	8/19/2012	8/23/2012	100	260	\$26,000.00	CVB Generated
12/8/2011	September 2012 legal Training	Booked	9/19/2012	9/24/2012	140	260	\$36,400.00	Repeat Business
8/30/2011	Medical Retreat	Cancelled	9/27/2012	9/28/2012	120	260	\$31,200.00	Email Request
12/1/2011	Carefree Capers	Definite	10/2/2012	10/5/2012	26	353	\$9,178.00	ABA
2/2/2012	Mary Kay Sales Leaders 32nd Fall Retreat	Awaiting Client Response	10/5/2012	10/6/2012	80	260	\$20,800.00	Call-in
11/21/2011	Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training	Booked	10/8/2012	10/11/2012	40	260	\$10,400.00	Email Request
3/30/2009	NYS Public Employees Federation	Withdrew	10/11/2012	10/17/2012	240	260	\$62,400.00	CVB Generated
3/26/2012	Princeton Soccer	Booked	10/26/2012	10/27/2012	28	260	\$7,280.00	Accommodation Referral
3/26/2012	Princeton Field Hockey	Booked	10/27/2012	10/28/2012	20	260	\$5,200.00	Accommodation Referral
1/26/2012	Turkey Shoot- Varsity Tournament	Booked	11/2/2012	11/4/2012	200	250	\$50,000.00	Repeat Business
1/26/2012	Turkey Shoot- JV Tournament	Booked	11/9/2012	11/11/2012	200	250	\$50,000.00	Repeat Business
1/27/2012	NYS PHSSA Girls Swimming/Diving Championships	Definite	11/15/2012	11/16/2012	300	250	\$75,000.00	Ithaca College
3/23/2012	Saratoga Springs YMCA	Booked	3/15/2013	3/17/2013	120	260	\$31,200.00	IC Referral
3/20/2012	2013 YMCA Swimming Championships	Definite	3/15/2013	3/17/2013	500	260	\$130,000.00	IC Referral
2/6/2012	NYS PHSSA Girls Swimming/Diving Championships	Definite	11/21/2013	11/22/2013	300	250	\$75,000.00	Ithaca College
3/21/2012	Fulton County YMCA Flying Fish	Booked	3/15/17/13	3/17/2013	65	260	\$16,900.00	IC Referral

NYT Dog Park Composting 040512

<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/04/who-knew-upcycling-the-dog-poo/>
(+5,400 additional pickups per Google search, 4/4/12)

The New York Times

Thursday, April 4, 2012

Green

A Blog About Energy and the Environment



April 4, 2012, 1:46 PM

Who Knew? Upcycling the Dog Poo

By [JOANNA M. FOSTER](#)



It's been almost three years since a grand experiment began in Ithaca, N.Y., and the results are finally in. Yet there's not much to show for it — and that's what everyone was hoping for.



BioBagA compostable waste bag.

As [Kate Galbraith reported](#) in September 2009, [Allan H. Treman Marine State Park](#) in Ithaca generated a lot of buzz by introducing a pioneering waste composting project in its dog park at the urging of a Cornell University professor and other dog owners.

Nationally, some 78 million dogs produce over 10.6 million tons of dung annually. It poses public health risks if left on the streets, is harmful to the environment when left on the side of trails and takes centuries to decompose in plastic garbage bags that end up in landfills.

In the park's experiment, corn-based compostable bags were placed in dispensers in the dog park. People who visited with their pets were urged to use the bags to retrieve their dogs' waste and to place them in receptacles. [Cayuga Compost](#), a local company, picked up the waste weekly for processing and composting.

At its composting site in nearby Trumansburg, Cayuga dumped the waste into a pile mixed with a bit of yard and wood waste. In 18 months, the company composted about 12 tons of dog waste from the park that would otherwise have outlived all of the dogs and their owners.

The end result was just two truckloads of compost.

“It’s about a 93 percent consolidation,” said Mark Whiting, program manager at Cayuga Compost.

What is more, lab tests have shown that the compost is pathogen-free — a big concern, given its origins — and has a high-nutrient profile that is perfect for flowers, shrubs and trees, Mr. Whiting said. He called it a great example of upcycling, or taking something that is otherwise considered garbage and turning it into a product with higher value.

When the program began, the idea was to sell the compost, but there’s not enough of it to make such an effort commercially viable. [Leon Kochian](#), a professor of plant biology at Cornell and a member of the [Tompkins County Dog Owners Group](#), said that all of it would probably be returned to the park to help fertilize new trees planted on Earth Day, April 22.

“We might even try and raffle it off as a fund-raiser,” he said. “People love their dogs.”

The park poo project, which costs about \$5,000 annually, was financed through donations. Of that, \$1,000 goes to Cayuga Compost, and the rest covers the price of 50,000 compostable bags needed to stock the dispensers in the park each year.

Ithaca is not alone in its quest to divert dog waste from landfills. Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto all have similar programs. In the United States, a company in Aurora, Colo., called [EnviroWagg](#) collects dog waste from parks, shelters and businesses and sells the finished product, [Doggone Good Compost](#), locally.

Dog waste has also made its way to the big screen, thanks to the Australian filmmaker James Boldiston, who traveled the world — even stopping in Ithaca — for his lighthearted 2011 documentary [“Dog Poo: The Truth at Last.”](#)