

## Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Final Meeting Minutes

1 **Date:** Sept. 20, 2023  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30  
 3 **Location:** Old Jail Conference Room/Via Zoom

4

5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	Teri Tarshus	E	At-Large
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	Marian Levy Ware	E	At-Large
Laura Winter Falk	P	At-Large	<i>Megan Barber</i>	P	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
Josh Friedman [Z]	P	Arts-Culture	Peggy Coleman	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Alexis Zaharis Grimm	P	Lodging	<i>Nan Rohrer</i>	E	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Vacant	N/A	Ithaca College	<i>Mike Sigler</i>	A	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large	<i>Heather McDaniel</i>	E	<i>IAED, Non-Voting</i>
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	E	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Patty Poist</i>	E	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Rick Manning	E	At-Large	<i>Michael Miller</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	<i>Jon Reis</i>	E	<i>Associate Member</i>
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Monika Roth	E	Agriculture	<i>Chuck Tauck</i>	E	<i>Associate Member</i>
Richard Floyd	E	TC3	Nick Helmholt	P	Tourism Program Director
Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture	Kristin McCarthy	P	County Staff
Jeremiah Swain [Z]	P	At-Large			

6 **Guests:** Kurt Anderson, Jeff Golden, Suzanne Smith Jablonski [Z], Chris Stephany [Z]

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8 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda/Privilege of the Floor** –Chair Brett Bossard welcomed  
 9 everyone to the meeting at 3:02pm. Jeff Golden, incoming representative from Ithaca College, introduced  
 10 himself. This led to a quick round of introductions from the whole group. The Tourism Capital grant review  
 11 committee report was moved to earlier in the agenda.

12

13 **Action: Approval of August 2023 STPB Draft Minutes** – The draft August 2023 minutes were approved as  
 14 submitted (moved by Alexis Zaharis Grimm, seconded by Ken Jupiter), with the addition of Doug Levine as  
 15 an attendee.

16

17 **Report: Tourism Capital Grant Review Committee** – *Ken Jupiter*

18 Ken Jupiter, on behalf of the Tourism Capital Grant Review Committee, provided an overview of the  
 19 applications submitted in this round and thanked his fellow committee members, Kurt Anderson from  
 20 Ithaca Area Economic Development, and County staff for their support. Requests for funding (\$413,550)  
 21 exceeded the available budget (\$291,000) with eight proposals (two feasibility studies, six capital  
 22 improvement studies) submitted and six recommended, leaving \$0 in available funds. Ken’s report and the  
 23 subsequent Q&A discussion covered review process, returns on investment, capital campaigns, business  
 24 models, and questions about individual applications.

25 **Action:** Ken Jupiter made a motion, which Steven Stull seconded, to recommend the 2023 Tourism Capital  
 26 Grant awards be approved for funding. Motion carried, with Doug Levine abstaining.

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28 **Chair’s Report** – *Brett Bossard*

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30 Brett wished everyone a happy fall.

31

32 **Staff Report** – *Nick Helmholdt*

33 The County Legislature has appointed Richard Floyd the new TC3 representative. Jeff Golden is expected to  
34 be in the Ithaca College seat by the October STPB meeting. Nick created a member resources page on the  
35 STPB website. He also shared the following updates on the Strategic Tourism Implementation (STI) grant  
36 program: the Downtown Ithaca Alliance's application for a retail incentive program was approved by the  
37 County Legislature and is now in the contract phase; IthacaTrails.org and the Chamber of Commerce's  
38 wayfinding initiative have advanced to the full application stage; and the STI committee still needs to  
39 review the Ithaca Tompkins International Airport letter of interest. The deadline for submitting STI letters  
40 of interest is Nov. 1, 2023.

41

42 **Report/Action: Recommend Fall 2023 Community Celebration Grant Award** – *Doug Levine*

43 Doug reported that 11 applications were received, with three deemed ineligible for funding under grant  
44 guidelines. He shared highlights from the remaining applications and relayed committee's recommendation  
45 that one ("Creating Your Own Barn Quilt") be shifted to the Tourism Advancement grant program. None of  
46 the applicants requested the full \$3,000 in funding, and committee recommended that their requests be  
47 granted in their entirety. His report and the subsequent discussion also touched on repeat versus new  
48 applicants, advice communicated to declined applicants for strengthening future grant submissions, and  
49 process for transferring the Brooktondale submission to Tourism Advancement grant category.

50

51 **Action:** Doug Levine made a motion, which Kelly Makosch seconded, to recommend that \$10,875 in  
52 funding for the Fall 2023 Community Celebrations grant program be awarded and that \$2,175 in proposed  
53 funding for the Brooktondale Community Center's "Creating Your Own Barn Quilt" application be  
54 reallocated for consideration in the Fall 2023 Tourism Advancement grant program. Motion carried.

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56 **Report/Action: Recommend Fall 2023 Tourism Advancement Grant Award** – *Kelly Makosch*

57 Kelly Makosch, on behalf of the Tourism Advancement grant review committee, reported on the  
58 applications submitted in this round and thanked her fellow committee members and County staff for their  
59 support. Of the seven applications originally received, four were recommended. In addition, per the  
60 board's recommendation as part of the Fall 2023 Community Celebrations grant discussion, the  
61 Brooktondale Community Center's application "Creating Your Own Barn Quilt" was added to the list of  
62 recommended Tourism Advancement grants, bringing the total to five. Total funding recommended  
63 totaled \$48,675. Q&A discussion covered individual applications and rationale behind committee decision-  
64 making, eligibility requirements, grant cycle timing, and public outreach.

65

66 **Action:** Kelly Makosch made a motion, which Kelli Cartmill seconded, to recommend the 2023 Fall Tourism  
67 Advancement Grant awards be approved for funding. Motion carried, with Brett Bossard abstaining.

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69 **Report/Action: Revise Budget Surplus and Reserve Policy** – *Nick Helmholdt*

70 Members reviewed proposed revisions to the budget surplus and reserve policy, which advocate for  
71 increasing the target reserve to 25% of an average of the past two years actual room tax collections and  
72 the current forecast for room tax collection in the adopted budget. The general idea is to have a bigger  
73 cushion in case of a downturn in the economy and in the long term to move the budget process to use  
74 funds from prior years room tax collection. There would also be a change to the second part of the policy,  
75 the clause on exceptional circumstances. This policy would affect the 2025 budget process. This proposal

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76 was in response to discussion at the legislature about the amount of room tax reserves. Greg noted that  
77 the revisions align with what the County is doing to build up its surplus.

78  
79 **Action:** Kelli Cartmill made a motion, which Brett Bossard seconded, to approve revisions to the STPB  
80 Budget Reserve and Surplus Hotel Room Occupancy Tax Policy. Motion carried.

81  
82 **Update: Community Arts Partnership – Megan Barber**

83 Megan updated the group on Community Arts Partnership (CAP) activities in 2023. After providing an  
84 overview of CAP's history and mission, she shared highlights related to some of the CAP partnership grants  
85 and programs that are funded in part by room tax dollars. These included Market the Arts, Arts and Cultural  
86 Development Organization (ACOD) and ACOD Stabilization & Recovery grants, Spring Writes Literary  
87 Festival, Ithaca Artists Market, public sculpture funding, fiscal sponsorship, general operating expenses,  
88 support for Tompkins County poet laureate, Ithaca Arts Odyssey Campaign, as well as networking and  
89 technical assistance for artists and arts organizations. She also spent time talking about plans for a Food  
90 Sculpture Trail.

91  
92 **Member Announcements**

93 Members reported on the launch of the State Theatre's fall season, the need for volunteers for the Apple  
94 Harvest festival, and upcoming performances by Opera Ithaca. They also learned about Friends of Stewart  
95 Park's Party in the Park and a festive Georgian food and wine event hosted by Experience the Finger Lakes  
96 at Hound and Mare. In addition, members were informed about the closure of Route 96 near Perry City  
97 Road by the NYS Department of Transportation. Peggy shared that the Tompkins Chamber was named  
98 chamber of the year by the Business Council of New York State. She also announced that the CVB is  
99 collaborating with partners to help promote the total solar eclipse forecast for next April as a tourism-  
100 generating event in the region

101  
102 **Adjournment** – Chair Brett Bossard adjourned the meeting at 4:23pm.