

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Final Meeting Minutes – February 21, 2018**

1 **Date:** February 21, 2018
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm
 3 **Location:** TC Chamber of Commerce/CVB, 904 East Shore Drive, Ithaca, NY 14850
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5 **Attendees:**

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
David Blake	E	At-Large	Martha Armstrong	E	TCAD, Non-Voting
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	Peggy Coleman	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	Gary Ferguson	A	DIA, Non-Voting
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture	Anna Kelles	P	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Steve Hugo	E	At-Large		A	Transportation, Non-Voting
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large	Dwight Mengel	A	Transportation, Non-Voting
Anne Kellerman	E	At-Large	John Spence	P	CAP, Non-Voting
Doug Levine	A	Arts-Culture	Jennifer Tavares	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Mike Mellor	P	At-Large			
Cara Nichols	P	Ithaca College	Ethan Ash	A	Associate Member
Stephen Nunley	P	At-Large	Jim Brophy	A	Associate Member
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	Erica Frenay	E	Associate Member
Sue Stafford	P	TC3	Carol Kammen	A	Associate Member
Julie Swigart	E	Lodging	Jon Reis	E	Associate Member
Baruch Whitehead	P	Arts-Culture	Mary Kate Wheeler	A	Associate Member
Scott Wiggins	P	At-Large			
Andy Zepp	P	Recreation	N/A	P	Staff
*Monika Roth (pending)	N/A	Agriculture	Kristin McCarthy	P	Staff

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8 **Guests:** Katie Borgella, Rick Manning, Ronda Roaring, Erin Rafalowski, Shelly Cihan, Kelly Sutliff,
 9 Eileen Mowry

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 11 Chair Kelli Cartmill called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm.

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 13 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Kelli welcomed everyone. The Adworkshop
 14 presentation was moved to earlier in the agenda because of a winter travel advisory. Cara
 15 announced that the move-in date for Ithaca College students has been changed to Saturday,
 16 August 25. She asked the members to share the information with their networks as traditionally
 17 students have always moved in on a Sunday.

18
 19 **January 17, 2018 STPB Meeting Minutes**

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 21 **ACTION:** Sue Stafford moved to approve the January minutes. Josh Friedman seconded. Motion
 22 carried. [Cara Nichols’ first name had been misspelled in the original draft of the minutes;
 23 however, it was corrected prior to today’s meeting.]

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 25 **Privilege of the Floor** –

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 27 Rick Manning of the Friends of Stewart Park expressed his appreciation for all the work put into
 28 the Outdoor Recreation Tourism Implementation Plan and asked if there would be a public
 29 comment period. Legislator Dan Klein, who is a member of ACOD review panel, raised his

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30 concerns about the allocation of room tax revenues in relation to the ACOD grant program versus
31 other programs funded by the Tourism Program.

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33 **Adworkshop Presentation – Peggy Coleman**

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35 Peggy Coleman introduced Erin Rafalowski, digital marketing manager for the CVB, to the Board
36 and welcomed Eileen Mowry, Shelly Cihan, and Kelly Sutliff from the integrated marketing firm
37 Adworkshop. The Adworkshop team gave a presentation on the results of their search marketing
38 program and its application with the CVB website in 2017. Here are some highlights from their
39 talk:

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- 41 • Google is tending to keep searchers within its own products; local search is gaining
42 prominence; voice search technology increasing; and Google is mixing images and features
43 from different sites in its search results
- 44 • Website traffic is up, with a spike in searches around Fourth of July; users from New York
45 City and Ithaca are driving most of the traffic to the site
- 46 • Top referrals to visitithaca.com came from cornell.edu, facebook.com, columbiabb.com,
47 Ithaca.edu, pinterest.com, newyorkupstate.com, and cornellbigred.com; top users are
48 ages 25-34 and predominately female, according to Google Analytics.
- 49 • The Paid AdWords program is performing 200 percent better than industry average, with
50 an overall bounce rate of 29%

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52 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**

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- 54 • Kelli welcomed Scott Wiggins back to the STPB in his new role as At-Large member. She
55 also thanked Monika Roth, who was still awaiting her official appointment by the
56 Legislature to the Agriculture seat, for attending the meeting. She should be sworn in by
57 the March meeting.
- 58 • Rod Howe is seeking an STPB representative for the newly formed Heritage Tourism
59 Steering Committee. Interested parties should contact Kelli.
- 60 • Kelli introduced Anna Kelles as the Board’s new legislative liaison.
- 61 • Copies of the 2017 Annual Report were distributed to the Board members during Kelli’s
62 report. Brett thanked Cara and Ithaca College for printing them.
- 63 • The Budget Committee still needs a chair. [Update: Sue Stafford and Scott Wiggins will be
64 co-chairing.]

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66 **Staff Report – Katie Borgella**

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- 68 • Katie Borgella swore in Scott Wiggins, Cara Nichols, Josh Friedman, and Kelli Cartmill to
69 their new terms on the STPB. Jennifer Tavares notarized their oath cards.
- 70 • Nick Helmholdt, the County’s new tourism director, starts Monday, February 26. Katie
71 thanked the Board for helping to keep things running smoothly during the transition.

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- Kristin McCarthy will reach out shortly to schedule Grant Review Committee meetings for the Spring 2018 round of applications. She is also working with Peggy and Erin Rafalowski to pull together the Outdoor Recreation Tourism Implementation Plan.

Update: Outdoor Recreation Tourism Implementation Plan – Kelli Cartmill

The members discussed the revised version of the draft Outdoor Recreation Tourism Plan, which was included in the agenda packet for today’s meeting. Before departing the County, Tom Knipe addressed concerns about the plan raised at the January STPB meeting and incorporated relevant changes accordingly. Kelli invited the members to take a few minutes to look over the plan and share additional feedback. Baruch Whitehead expressed concern about the lack of diversity represented in the photos used for the plan, and Anna had questions regarding the budget breakdown outlined in the plan. The plan will next be released for public comment, before returning to the STPB for final approval in April. Peggy, Kelli, Andy, and Nick will work together to fine-tune this process.

ACTION: A motion by Brett Bossard, seconded by Mike Mellor, to release the draft Outdoor Recreation Tourism Implementation Plan for public comment was approved unanimously.

Update: ACOD Grant Review Committee– John Spence

The ACOD panel met but the members were unable to achieve a consensus on distribution of the 2018 funds. For that reason, the STPB will not vote on the current round of applications until the March meeting. There were many more requests for grants than there were funds available. John gave some background context to the budget issues raised by Dan during Privilege of the Floor. A written copy of John’s report to the STPB is included in the March 21st meeting agenda packet.

STPB Member Goals for 2018 – Small Group Discussion

The members broke into smaller groups to strategize over goals to pursue for 2018. The entire group then reconvened to recap what thoughts and ideas had surfaced during the discussion.

STPB Member Goals for 2018 – Large Group Discussion

Each group had an unofficially appointed note-taker, who will forward his or her notes to Kelli following the meeting. Kelli will compile everything into a draft goals list and present to the Board for a vote at the March meeting. Here are some highlights from the discussion.

- A) Sue’s Group: Budget Surplus -- Think “big picture” and consider pursuing projects long on the Tourism Program wish list, such as Wayfinding. Per Sue’s words, “We should not just feed the animals but expand the zoo.” Brainstorm ideas for an orientation for Nick to help with the learning curve.
- B) Scott Group’s: Start preparing for the Strategic Plan update.
- C) John’s Group: Consider re-evaluating the long-term budget for ACOD.

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- 116 D) Anna's Group: Focus on recruiting a more diverse membership.
117 E) Peggy's Group: Review the grant process -- are we missing out on opportunities because of
118 how things are structured?
119 F) Brett's Group: Update the PDEQ Committee on the work of the STPB. Include Anna in
120 orientation for Nick.

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122 The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 by Chair Kelli Cartmill.

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