

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

1 **Date:** March 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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**Attendees:**

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

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 8 **Guests:** Ronda Roaring, Katie Borgella, Erin Rafalowski, Jonathan Froelich, Danielle  
 9 Baker, Sarah Imes, Kina Viola

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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** – None

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 15 **February 21, 2018 STPB Meeting Minutes**

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 17 **ACTION:** Ken Jupiter moved to approve the February minutes. Mike Mellor seconded.  
 18 Motion carried.

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 20 **Privilege of the Floor** – Guest Ronda Roaring asked for a definition of “auricular tourism”  
 21 (turned out to be a typo: “agriculinary tourism”), expressed her concerns with the  
 22 Convention and Visitor Bureau’s 2018 Work Program, and spoke about the issue of  
 23 reaching a more diverse audience for our local tourism market.

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

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 27 Kelli’s first order of business was to call for a vote to approve the 2018 STPB Member  
 28 Goals.

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 30 **ACTION:** Cara Nichols moved, and Mike Mellor seconded, approval of the 2018 STPB  
 31 Member Goals.

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- 32 • Kelli thanked Peggy Coleman and Katie Borgella for their tremendous support  
33 during the transition between the end of Tom Knipe’s tenure and the start of Nick  
34 Helmholdt’s as tourism program director.
- 35 • Julie Swigart resigned from her Lodging seat due to a family move out of state. A  
36 press release was published recently announcing the vacancy, and a few people  
37 have reached out to Kelli directly.
- 38 • Baruch Whitehead asked if a section about diversity could be added to our grant  
39 applications. He also inquired about expanding the board’s outreach efforts to  
40 communities of color.

41  
42 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

- 43
- 44 • Tourism Program has a new logo and brand guidelines. Nick will distribute  
45 electronic files shortly.
- 46 • Grant application deadline was Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup>. There were 12 Tourism  
47 Program Grant requests for over \$138,000; 10 New Tourism Initiative applications  
48 for roughly \$102,000; 21 Tourism Marketing and Advertising grant applications for  
49 \$63,000; and 15 Community Celebrations applications requesting over \$25,000.
- 50 • In addition, 7 Tourism Capital Grant applications were received for a total of more  
51 than \$400,000 in funding requests.
- 52 • The draft Outdoor Recreation Tourism Implementation Plan is out for public  
53 comment until April 9th.
- 54 • Nick’s top priority is developing the 2019 Budget.

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56 **Update: Outdoor Recreation Tourism Implementation Plan – Andy Zepp**

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58 The plan has undergone extensive workshopping, including by the County’s Conservation  
59 Partners, and editorial review. Public comments will be collected until April 9 and a final  
60 draft should be ready for a vote by the April STPB meeting. Kudos and thanks were given  
61 to Erin Rafalowski for designing the draft plan.

62  
63 **2017 CVB Annual Report and 2018 Work Program – Peggy Coleman**

- 64
- 65 • Peggy Coleman and CVB staff members Erin Rafalowski (digital marketing),  
66 Jonathan Froelich (meeting and conference sales), Danielle Baker (visitor  
67 experience), Sarah Imes (group tours), and Kina Viola (agriculinary tourism) spoke  
68 to the group about various aspects of the CVB’s 2017 Annual Report and 2018  
69 Work Program. Details can be found in the two reports, which are available upon  
70 request. Here, however, are some highlights from the CVB team’s presentation:
- 71 • Everything within the 2018 Work Program was developed with the end goal of  
72 supporting the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.
- 73 • Sarah Imes shared a clip from a promotional video done to promote group tour  
74 sales
- 75 • Jonathan is strategically marketing meeting and conference sales to associations  
76 and institutions of higher education. Her department partnered with I Love New

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77 York and BrandUSA to host familiarization tours for 27 people representing 26  
78 companies from China, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Scotland.

- 79 • Team continues to recruit midweek tourism business and hopes to grow the  
80 Destination Weddings market by 20% in 2018. Sports tourism is another avenue  
81 they'd like to develop. In particular, TC3 has a wonderful disc golf facility and could  
82 attract winter visitors.
- 83 • Tourism marketing collateral is being translated into Mandarin.
- 84 • Digital marketing manager Erin Rafalowski reported that the Ithaca Events feature  
85 is popular among visitors to the CVB website. Top trending events include the  
86 Finger Lakes Grassroots and Ithaca Reggae Festivals.
- 87 • Ithaca was named the 2017 Emerging Nature Destination in the USA by the Luxury  
88 Travel Guide Awards.
- 89 • The CVB will be responsible for retail operations for the Heritage and Culture  
90 Center, which is slated to open in 2019; they want to be a value-added resource  
91 and not competition to merchants downtown.
- 92 • Staff members are expanding marketing efforts for the Winter Recess program to  
93 new audiences.
- 94 • The Visitor Profile Study continues to be a top priority for 2018.
- 95 • Peggy welcomed suggestions for events from members but explained that to pitch  
96 ideas successfully to tour groups and other perspective visitors, the more notice,  
97 the better. A year's notice is an ideal amount of time. She also reiterated the need  
98 to market events occurring at times other than July and August.

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100 **Update: ACOD Grant Review Committee– John Spence**

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102 There was \$312,000 in funding requests but only \$219,000 available. During the grant  
103 panel discussions, the question arose of whether money from the budget surplus could be  
104 applied to the ACOD program. However, Kelli informed the committee that timing wouldn't  
105 allow for such a redistribution and advised them to proceed with the budget as given. The  
106 ACOD program for 2018 received a 10 percent boost in funding, and in 2019 they are  
107 asking for a 4 percent increase. For details on the applicant organizations and amounts  
108 requested and recommended, please see John Spence's ACOD report, which is available  
109 upon request.

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111 **ACTION:** David Blake moved to recommend the 2018 ACOD grants. Scott Wiggins  
112 seconded. Motion carried. Doug Levine abstained.

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114 **Update: STI Grant Panel – Ken Jupiter**

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116 Ken gave a brief overview of the Strategic Tourism Initiative (STI) grant program, which  
117 was created specifically to advance portions of the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan. It's a  
118 two-part process (letter of interest followed by full application) and applications are  
119 accepted on a rolling basis.

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121 He brought three STI funding requests before the board for recommendation, two of which  
122 asked for less than the \$25,000 grant minimum. He asked members to waive the  
123 minimum in those cases.

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**ACTION:** Vote to recommend STI grants

David Blake moved to recommend gap funding (\$13,000 for staff and \$5,000 in microgrants) for the CVB's Agritourism Program. Monika Roth seconded. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Doug Levine, and seconded by Baruch Whitehead, to recommend a one-time override of the \$25,000 grant minimum in relation to this request. Motion carried.

Scott Wiggins moved, and David Blake seconded, recommendation of a Tompkins County Workforce Development Board/Hospitality Star request for \$11,175 in funding for the "Visitor Journey A2D Ambassador Training Program." The motion was passed by the members present, who also recommended waiving the \$25,000 grant amount minimum.

Doug Levine moved, and Monika Roth seconded, to recommend \$26,000 in funding the "Dryden Rail Trail Route 13 Crossing Preliminary Design and F.H. Fox Bridge Engineering" feasibility study from the Town of Dryden. Anne Kellerman opposed the motion. Motion carried.

**Member Announcements**

None

The meeting was adjourned at 4:46 by Chair Kelli Cartmill.