

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Final Meeting Minutes – May 16, 2018**

1 **Date:** May 16, 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
David Blake	P	At-Large
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture
Steve Hugo	A	At-Large
Ken Jupiter	E	At-Large
Anne Kellerman	P	At-Large
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture
Mike Mellor	P	At-Large
Cara Nichols	P	Ithaca College
Stephen Nunley	P	At-Large
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture
Sue Stafford	E	TC3
Vacant	N/A	Lodging
Baruch Whitehead	P	Arts-Culture
Scott Wiggins	A	At-Large
Andy Zepp	E	Recreation

Name	✓	Representation
Martha Armstrong	P	TCAD, Non-Voting
Peggy Coleman	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Gary Ferguson	P	DIA, Non-Voting
Anna Kelles	P	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Dwight Mengel	A	Transportation, Non-Voting
John Spence	P	CAP, Non-Voting
Jennifer Tavares	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Ethan Ash	A	Associate Member
Jim Brophy	A	Associate Member
Erica Frenay	E	Associate Member
Carol Kammen	E	Associate Member
Jon Reis	E	Associate Member
Mary Kate Wheeler	A	Associate Member
Nick Helmholdt	P	Staff
Kristin McCarthy	P	Staff

Guests: Ronda Roaring, Heather Hughes

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 9 Chair Kelli Cartmill called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

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 11 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – None

12 **Privilege of the Floor** – Ronda Roaring commented on STPB oversight of grant recipient
 13 activity and shared feedback on the Spring Writes Festival.

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 15 **Approval of the April 18, 2018 STPB Meeting Minutes**

16 **Action:** Anne Kellerman moved to approve the April 2018 minutes. Doug Levine
 17 seconded. Motion carried.

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 19 **Chair's Report – Kelli Cartmill**

20 Kelli reminded everyone to attend the May 30th meeting with the Legislature to discuss the
 21 future of the Tourism Program. It will take place at the Tompkins County Public Library
 22 (BorgWarner Room) from 3 to 4:30 pm.

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 24 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

- 25 • Nick traveled with Gary Ferguson, Doug Levine, Peggy Coleman, and other
 26 colleagues to Burlington, Vermont, for an exchange visit.
- 27 • Governor Cuomo announced a \$22 million expansion of Ithaca Tompkins Regional
 28 Airport, to begin this fall. The expansion includes new nonstop air service to
 29 Washington Dulles International Airport.
- 30 • Members are encouraged to share feedback on the draft Tactical Placemaking
 31 Toolkit. They can find it via the DropBox link included in the May agenda. It will also
 32 be posted to the STPB website.

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- The ribbon cutting for the new Ithaca Falls signage is scheduled for May 24th.
- CSMA is hosting a celebration of Ithaca’s new Art Bike Racks as part of June 8th Downtown Gallery Night.

Community Celebrations Grant Panel Update – David Blake

David Blake explained the thought process behind letting the Groton Olde Home Days Committee (via Village of Groton) re-apply under Community Celebrations. (They were denied a Tourism Project Grant in the Spring 2018 round.)

Action: A motion was made by Stephen Nunley, seconded by Baruch Whitehead, to approve a Spring 2018 Community Celebrations Grant for Groton Olde Home Days. Motion carried.

Room Tax, Q1 2018 Report – Nick Helmholdt

- Over the past few years, Q1 has consistently come in around 11%.
- The report breaks out tax-exempt figures and hotel room vs. B&B taxes.
- Kelli pointed out that the 1.7% growth in room taxes did not come from hotels or B&Bs, but in fact probably from Airbnb. What is worrisome to her is that there was a substantial increase in hotel room supply with new properties coming on-line yet the room tax figures stayed the same. She added that we need demand generators for hotels — e.g. group conferences.
- David commented that the Legislature needs to realize getting overnight visitors in hotels and B&Bs leads to spending in restaurants, arts and culture, etc. Unlike professional hoteliers and others in the hospitality business, Airbnb hosts are not tourism ambassadors.

For more details, please see the report in the May agenda packet.

CVB Monthly Report & Visitor Profile Study Update – Peggy Coleman

- She introduced Heather Hughes, the CVB’s new director of sales and marketing. Heather worked at the CVB 15 years ago, followed by a position at the Corning Museum of Glass for several years and most recently with the Franziska Racker Center. She and Erin Rafalowski led the recent Tourism Marketing Workshops.
- Peggy spoke with contractors regarding the Visitor Profile Study.
- The June STPB meeting will need to be held elsewhere due to scheduled construction at the CVB.

The monthly report is available online for anyone seeking more details.

Budget Committee Report – Nick and Kelli

- Budget requests for 2019 have all been received, and presentations are scheduled for the morning of May 21st at TC3 Tioga Center. The Budget Committee will meet immediately afterward to review the submitted proposals.
- Anna Kelles urged STPB members to attend the May 30th meeting with the Legislature, remarking that her fellow legislators need more background information so the ACOD program can be put into the proper context.

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- Anna encouraged members to attend the May 29th PDEQ meeting. County administrator Jason Molino will be presenting three budget proposals for 2019.

Arts and Culture Committee Report – Baruch Whitehead

Baruch Whitehead reported on the first meeting of the Arts and Culture Committee. Here are a few highlights from Baruch’s comments as well as the discussion that followed:

- The draft STPB Diversity and Inclusion Statement was seen as a salient starting point for their work. He will forward it to the Planning and Evaluation Committee for review.
- Committee will meet once a month.
- How to attract more applicants for ACOD funding?
- What about basing grant awards in line with organization budgets?
- How can we better support visual artists in our community?
- It would be good to pull together a community meeting of the key arts & culture stakeholders.
- People don’t seem to understand that all the funding comes from room tax.
- In the long term, how is arts and culture funding best integrated in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan?
- Is the arts and culture grant process something to be learned, with time, or something to be simplified?

Communications & Branding Committee Report – Josh Friedman

In an effort to standardize the language used by grant recipients to credit the Tourism Program, the Committee created a set of grantee recognition guidelines.

- Nick will forward the STPB-approved guidelines to current grantees as guidance.
- Once the County has fine-tuned the language, the final version will be attached to every outgoing contract, starting with the Fall 2018 grant round.
- Grantees will be able to download the Tourism Program logo in various formats from a webpage.

Action: A motion was made by David Blake, and seconded by Brett Bossard, to approve the Tompkins County Tourism Program Grantee Recognition Guidelines. Motion carried.

Mission Impact Exercise, Follow-up – Josh Friedman

At the April STPB meeting, Josh asked the members to break into small groups and create five to seven “Aims” for the Tourism Program. After the meeting, he then compiled all the lists into one document by topic.

Today, he once again asked the members to break into small groups and evaluate how he’d organized their comments and whether they thought anything should be shifted to a different category. Here are a few comments from their brainstorming session:

- Anne thought there should be an umbrella term covering everything: “How Do We Spend the Money?”

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- Several members asked, how do we define quality of life? Tourism development is often a double-edged sword: e.g. traffic jams and crazy hotel guests can have an immediate negative impact on residents' quality of life; yet these same inconveniences are signs of a growing tourism economy, which in the long term can benefit the entire community.
 - Jennifer Tavares added that quality of life could also include making scholarships available to local people who normally can't access some of our great amenities due to financial constraints.
 - Kelli suggested changing the phrase "memorable experience" to "memorable and positive experience."
 - Gary Ferguson thought Wayfinding should be added to the list.
 - Martha Armstrong suggested increasing the amount of funds available to train people on the front lines of our hospitality sector. Right now, only \$30,000 is allotted to that category in the budget.
 - Jennifer commented that a big challenge for the CVB/Chamber of Commerce team is that none of the Critical Actions listed in the current Strategic Plan apply to the work they do.
 - Gary struggled to prioritize the Aims because he thought they belong at different stages of the process. Some feel actionable, while others would be an investment or an outcome. All are important and relate to each other, but you can't make direct comparisons between them.

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146 **Member Announcements**

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- Anne commented on the loss of a direct flight to New York once nonstop service to Washington, D.C. starts.
 - Monika Roth announced that the Agriculinary Tourism Committee is meeting Tuesday, May 22nd, at 2 pm.
 - Kelli is hearing mixed reviews from guests and others about Lime Bike. Anna encouraged her to pass on feedback to Bike Walk Tompkins.

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