

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Draft Meeting Minutes – June 20, 2018**

1 **Date:** June 20, 2018
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm
 3 **Location:** Hilton Garden Inn, Ithaca, NY 14850
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Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
David Blake	P	At-Large	Martha Armstrong	P	TCAD, Non-Voting
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	Peggy Coleman	E	Chamber, Non-Voting
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	Gary Ferguson	P	DIA, Non-Voting
Josh Friedman	P	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	E	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	P	At-Large	Erica Frenay	E	Associate Member
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	Carol Kammen	A	Associate Member
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture	Jon Reis	P	Associate Member
Sue Stafford	E	TC3	Nick Helmholdt	P	Staff
Vacant	N/A	Lodging	Kristin McCarthy	P	Staff
Baruch Whitehead	E	Arts-Culture			
Scott Wiggins	P	At-Large			
Andy Zepp	P	Recreation			

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9 **Guests:** Katie Borgella, Rod Howe, Warren Allmon, Star Bressler, Ronda Roaring

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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 **Privilege of the Floor** – Ronda Roaring reported that her U-pick list for the 14 counties in the
 16 Finger Lakes has been reduced by a third, with only five U-pick places identified in Tompkins
 17 County. She also urged the STPB to explore maple syrup as a tourism draw in our area and to
 18 work with local farmers to help them become more tourist-friendly.

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 20 **Approval of the May 23, 2018 STPB Meeting Minutes**

21 **Action:** David Blake moved to approve the May 2018 minutes. Stephen Nunley seconded. Motion
 22 carried.

23
 24 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**

25 Kelly attended a hospitality tour aboard the *MV Teal*. She gave tour operators feedback on their
 26 tour brochure and tips for attracting hotel visitors. During her report, Nick passed around the
 27 calendar of events funded by the Tourism Program. Kelli encouraged members to attend events.

28
 29 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

30 Nick handed out new Ithaca Tompkins County bike maps. Members can contact him if they’d like
 31 more copies. They should also reach out to him with feedback or questions regarding the Strategic
 32 Tourism Plan update. The County Legislature adopted the TCAD budget at their last meeting.

33
 34 **CVB Monthly Report & Visitor Profile Study Update – Jodi LaPierre and Jennifer Tavares**

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36 Jennifer and Jodi got the board members up to speed on recent happenings at the CVB as well as
37 progress with the Visitor Profile Study. Here are some highlights:

- 38 • More than 1,000 responses have come in for the digital visitor profile survey; visitor
39 intercept survey will start soon.
- 40 • Visitor Experience van has been wrapped.
- 41 • Heather Hughes has rejoined the team as director of sales and marketing.
- 42 • The Visitor Center at Taughannock has seen an uptick in traffic over May 2017 and an
43 increase in sales of “Ithaca is Gorges” branded merchandise. Sales reached \$10,972 this
44 May versus \$3,088 in May 2017. As of yesterday (June 19th), sales broke \$20,000 (last
45 year they were \$8,000).

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47 **Membership & Bylaws Committee Update – David Blake**

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49 **Action:** A motion was made by Scott Wiggins, seconded by Cara Nichols, to recommend
50 Kathleen Kutz for the Lodging seat. Motion carried.

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52 **Strategic Tourism Plan Steering Committee Update – Kelli Cartmill**

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54 Board needs to create a steering committee to begin work on the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.
55 Anyone interested in serving on the committee should contact Nick. A timeline for the full adoption
56 of the Strategic Plan can be found in the June agenda packet.

57
58 **Budget Committee Report – Scott Wiggins**

- 59 • Anna Kelles, Nick, and members of Budget and Planning & Evaluation Committees
60 attempted to summarize the Legislature’s discussion and decision-making in regards to the
61 TCAD budget. The Legislature’s debate pivoted mostly over the contribution of room taxes
62 versus property taxes to the budget.
- 63 • Anna once again emphasized that educating the legislators, especially the newcomers, on
64 the nuances of the Tourism Program is crucial. Many still seem to think room tax just goes
65 to funding arts and culture. Scott Wiggins said the Budget Committee is pulling together a
66 white paper to show them the funding trend for arts and culture and where the money
67 comes from. Legislature needs to be educated better on the impact of outdoor recreation
68 in growing tourism here.
- 69 • Josh Friedman urged members to consider economic benefits of arts and culture tourism.
70 State Theatre, Hangar Theatre, and other venues draw out of county visitors, many of
71 whom stay overnight in area lodging. Ken Jupiter commented that we need to show
72 benefits of other tourism sectors.
- 73 • Brett Bossard reminded everyone that Dylan Tuttle’s room tax report answers how funds
74 have historically been divided by sector.
- 75 • Anna added that she’s heard misinformation about Dylan’s report being incorrect in its
76 number crunching. Members were concerned to hear that.
- 77 • Members were concerned that at the recent STPB-Legislature meeting a few people
78 central to the discussion had nothing to say. Anna said some of it could be personality-
79 related — a few legislators are introverted and might feel more comfortable sharing
80 thoughts in writing. She also thought the setup was a bit awkward. Cynicism might lead
81 one to think certain people’s silence suggests there is no motivation to collaborate. In that
82 case, she suggested the board focus on engaging the people who do seem interested in
83 working collaboratively.

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85 **Planning & Evaluation Committee Update: Diversity Statement – Ken Jupiter**

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- 87 • Members should email feedback to Nick or Ken on draft diversity statement so they can
- 88 finalize it. Statement will be voted on at next meeting.
- 89 • Jennifer and Nick will work on a short questionnaire for all Tourism Program funding
- 90 recipients to get a sense of their current diversity efforts.
- 91 • Going forward (likely starting in spring 2020), the STPB will require partners to have their
- 92 own diversity statements.
- 93 • A column will be added to the tourism grant matrix in Apricot to score diversity of applicant
- 94 event.

Presentation: Tompkins Center for History and Culture – Rod Howe

96 Rod walked through the PowerPoint presentation on the Center for History and Culture,
97 highlighting a few key developments.

- 99 • Construction kickoff event at Center on July 2nd at 8:30 a.m. Partner tenants will move into
- 100 their offices by January 2019. Exhibit hall and other spaces slated to open in March 2019.
- 101 • County now owns the building. Asbestos abatement should be done soon. Trying to get all
- 102 contracts signed. Each tenant partner will continue to manage their own business
- 103 expenses. County will cover utilities and maintenance. Mac Travis is managing
- 104 construction and relationships with bank and County.
- 105 • Center has received \$1.4 million in state funding. Partners are applying for Appalachian
- 106 Regional Commission (federal) funding. Jean McPheeters is helping to pull together that
- 107 application. Fifty percent of Capital Campaign goal (\$1.75 million) has been met. Mac and
- 108 Jean are leading the fund-raising effort. Cashflow likely to be a problem as state grants
- 109 won't come through for another six months. Park Foundation has committed to giving a
- 110 \$500,000 loan at .5% interest.
- 111 • Everyone should have received an invitation to a July 2nd cruise aboard the *MV Teal*.
- 112 Heritage Ambassadors will speak about the history of Cayuga Lake.
- 113 • Atrium will have donor wall, a fairly large kiosk with information on partners like CAP, a
- 114 schedule of events happening in the building, as well as events related to history and
- 115 culture throughout the area. A kiosk in the Visitor Center will promote events countywide.
- 116 • There will be six exhibit towers with rotating content. Outside organizations such as Cornell
- 117 may potentially use towers too. Exhibit hall material will change less frequently but digital
- 118 screens will switch up more often.
- 119 • Curators still trying to figure out how to integrate partner stories in exhibit space.
- 120 • There will be interactive kiosk displays, a small children's area, and an empty bank vault
- 121 that serves as a Storycorps-esque recording booth.
- 122 • Atrium and Visitor Center will probably sync hours of operations. Visitor Center will be open
- 123 during special events. Conference rooms will be available to rent for evening events. The
- 124 Exhibit Hall might be available too.
- 125 • History Center and Historic Ithaca are working to combine their libraries.

Member Announcements

- 128 • Cara Nichols will email dates for upcoming major events at Ithaca College.
- 129 • Diversity training will be scheduled for board members later this year.
- 130 • A field trip might be planned for the July meeting. August meeting might be cancelled.
- 131 Agriculinary Tourism Committee met recently. They're awaiting reports for \$500 mini grants
- 132 given to farms. Next grant round should be announced soon.
- 133 • A group of roughly 90 women from Michigan, Ohio, and parts of the Northeast were in town
- 134 for a garden tour. In addition, roughly 50 master gardeners from Michigan are traveling to
- 135 our area and the American Horticulture Society is having their Youth Gardening
- 136 Symposium in Ithaca in mid-July.

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138 David Blake adjourned the meeting at 4:33 pm. Kelli needed to leave early.