

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)  
Final Meeting Minutes – October 17, 2018**

1 **Date:** Oct. 17, 2018  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm  
 3 **Location:** Tompkins County CVB/Chamber of Commerce, 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	P	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	E	At-Large	Dwight Mengel	A	Transportation, Non-Voting
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large	John Spence	E	CAP, Non-Voting
Anne Kellerman	E	At-Large	Jennifer Tavares	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	Ethan Ash	A	Associate Member
Mike Mellor	P	At-Large	Jim Brophy	A	Associate Member
Cara Nichols	P	Ithaca College	Erica Frenay	E	Associate Member
Stephen Nunley	P	At-Large	Carol Kammen	E	Associate Member
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	Jon Reis	E	Associate Member
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture	Nick Helmholdt	P	Staff
Sue Stafford	E	TC3	Kristin McCarthy	P	Staff
Katie Kutz	A	Lodging			
Baruch Whitehead	E	Arts-Culture			
Scott Wiggins	P	At-Large			
Andy Zepp	P	Recreation			

7 **Guests:** None  
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9 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda**

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 11 Chair Kelli Cartmill called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m. The JLL presentation was moved to  
 12 3:55pm and done via WebEx as a medical emergency prevented the team from traveling.  
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14 **Approval of the September 26, 2018 STPB Meeting Minutes**

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 16 **Action:** Cara Nichols moved approval of the September 2018 minutes. David Blake seconded.  
 17 Motion carried.  
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19 **Privilege of the Floor** – None  
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21 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**

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 23 The Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency (IURA) won’t select a preferred developer for the Green Street  
 24 parking garage site until its November meeting. Hunden Strategic Partners will begin Phase Two  
 25 of the Downtown Ithaca Conference Center Market Demand Study and Financial Analysis once a  
 26 developer has been selected.  
 27

28 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

29 Nick Helmholdt gave an overview of the Q3 room tax report. Members discussed the impact on  
 30 room taxes from displaced Maplewood residents being housed in area hotels long term. Peggy  
 31 Coleman and Anna Kelles commented that PDEQ and the County Legislature should be made  
 32 aware of the Maplewood situation once final check-out numbers are available. Mr. Helmholdt

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33 reported that if room tax dollars for Q4 total \$649,430, then the projected 2018 budget will have  
34 been fully realized.

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36 **CVB Monthly Report – Peggy Coleman**

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38 Ms. Coleman shared highlights from the October CVB report, which was included in the agenda  
39 packet. The Visitors Center at Taughannock Falls remains busy, and sales of Ithaca is Gorges  
40 branded products reached \$113,000 early in the month.

41

42 **Community Celebrations Grant Panel Update – Brett Bossard**

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44 Five applications were submitted for the Fall 2018 grant round, and the committee recommended  
45 full funding for four. The members did not recommend funding the Wassa Pan Afrika Dance  
46 Ensemble as it did not fit Community Celebrations criteria. Mr. Helmholdt will reach out to the  
47 project coordinator with feedback and resources. Of the four applications recommended for grants,  
48 Vitamin L rescinded theirs because of a change in scheduling — their celebration will now be held  
49 as part of the Ithaca Festival. Brett Bossard thanked the board once more for agreeing to increase  
50 the funding cap for this grant category.

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52 **Action:** David Blake made a motion to recommend the Fall 2018 Community Celebration grants  
53 for funding. Scott Wiggins seconded. Motion carried.

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55 **Combined Tourism Grant Panel Update – Mike Mellor**

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57 Committee reviewed and recommended four applications, all in the New Tourism Initiative  
58 category, for full funding. Some STPB members questioned whether the *MVTeal* request  
59 overlapped with monies awarded to that organization under the Capital Tourism Grant program.

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61 **Action:** Brett Bossard moved approval of the Fall 2018 New Tourism Initiative grants. Andy Zepp  
62 seconded. Motion carried.

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64 **Membership & Bylaws Committee Report – David Blake**

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66 Committee is recruiting to fill three at-large seats. Two applications have been submitted so far.  
67 STPB members are strongly encouraged to forward recommendations.

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69 **P&E Committee Report – Ken Jupiter**

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71 Mr. Zepp reported on the recent outdoor recreation meeting for stakeholders. Members expressed  
72 interest in meeting more frequently, with individual focus area groups (Kids in Nature, Biking, etc.)  
73 possibly meeting quarterly. Lots of momentum, with initiatives from the County Priority Trails such  
74 as the Black Diamond Trail coming to fruition. Outdoor recreation will likely be a prominent  
75 component in the new Strategic Tourism Plan. Committee discussed allowing two organizations to  
76 form a partnership when applying for Tourism Marketing and Advertising grants, in which case they  
77 could apply for \$10,000 jointly instead of \$5,000 individually. Grant guidelines should reflect that in  
78 committee's opinion. RfPs for the Blueway Trail will be released soon by the County Purchasing  
79 Department for contracting.

80

81 **Presentation: Visitor Profile Study – JLL (David Holder)**

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83 David Holder from JLL walked group through the preliminary results of the digital survey via a  
84 PowerPoint presentation and WebEx conferencing. Sent to a variety of audiences in Tompkins  
85 County, the survey used lists from the CVB, the Statler Hotel and other accommodations, as well  
86 as Discovery trail partners. Some organizations sent the survey directly to their lists and some via  
87 JLL. Over 1,400 responses were received. Here are highlights from Mr. Holder's presentation:  
88

- 89 • Impact of Cornell University and Ithaca College on visitation cannot be overstated.
- 90 • Many visitors are relying on previous personal knowledge of the area. They also use  
91 college and university websites for planning travel to the area.
- 92 • Average visitor age skews high (36% 55-70 years old, 35% 40-55 years old) as does as  
93 yearly income (39% earn \$150K or above).
- 94 • Most respondents (60%) were employed full time, and 57% hold a graduate degree.
- 95 • Forty-two percent of respondents were from New York State. Number of repeat visitors is  
96 high, which in general is positive, but would like to see more repeat visitation to build  
97 tourism. Visitors are planning one week up to six months in advance and tend to stay 1-3  
98 nights. Intercept interviews should capture day tripper data more effectively and give a  
99 more accurate sense of accommodation stays (digital survey skews toward hotels but  
100 Statler guests were a large respondent group).
- 101 • Air travel ranks higher than in other markets, with most travelers going through Ithaca  
102 Tompkins County Regional Airport.
- 103 • Spending per day, which is based per party (families or couples), resembles amounts  
104 generated in other peer destinations; at \$103.59, dining came in a little high, while retail  
105 figures were low at \$54.76 (\$80-90 is average).
- 106 • Outdoor recreation is a strong driver for visitors to the area and is a potential niche market.
- 107 • 60% of respondents visited a state or local park, but lake-based activities scored low.

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109 **Member Announcements**

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- 111 • Kendall Blizzard joined the CVB as the new Agriculinary Tourism Marketing Coordinator.
- 112 • The Agriculinary Tourism Committee will meet next on October 29th.
- 113 • The group will be putting together an agenda for a spring workshop. Bet the Farm recently  
114 opened its own winery on Krums Corner Road in the Town of Ulysses.
- 115 • Apple Fest drew the largest crowd ever, with roughly 45,000 attendees. No specific  
116 demographic information is available, but anecdotal evidence strongly suggests people  
117 traveled from out of town to be there.
- 118 • The Ithaca Fantastik Festival starts Friday, October 26, and runs for 10 days.
- 119 • Cinemapolis will once again serve as the hub for the festival, but events will be happening  
120 at venues around town.
- 121 • Ithaca College orientation starts Wednesday, Aug. 21, 2019, and runs for seven days.  
122 Kitchen Theatre presents The Piano Teacher October 21st through November 4th.
- 123 • Hilton/Kilpatrick's continues to host its "Pub with a Purpose" campaign on Tuesday  
124 evenings to raise money for a different local nonprofit each fiscal quarter. Fifty percent of  
125 proceeds will go to the Tompkins Center for History and Culture through the end of  
126 December 2018.
- 127 • Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual auction Wednesday, October  
128 24th, at the Hotel Ithaca.
- 129

130 Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.