

# Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Wednesday, November 20, 2019; 3:00pm – 4:30 pm

**Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce/CVB, 904 East Shore Drive, Ithaca, NY**

<b>AGENDA</b>	<b>Start</b>
1. STPB Meeting Minutes	3:00
• ACTION – Approve September and October Meeting Minutes	
2. Privilege of the Floor	
• Limit of 3 minutes per person for members of the public to address the board	
3. Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill	3:05
4. Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt	3:15
5. CVB Monthly Report – Peggy Coleman	3:20
6. Membership & Bylaws Committee – Barbara Romano	3:25
• ACTION – Recommend new and returning voting members for 2020	3:35
• ACTION – Appoint 2020 Nominating Committee	
7. Strategic Tourism Plan Steering Committee Update – Nick Helmholdt	3:45
8. Presentation: Bed and Breakfast and Vacation Rentals of Greater Ithaca – Inez Vermaas	4:05
9. Member Announcements	4:25
10. Adjournment	4:30

## **Agenda Packet**

1. September and October 2019 Draft STPB Meeting Minutes
2. CVB Monthly Report for November
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> DRAFT – Strategic Tourism Plan 2021-2027 *(to be sent separately at later date)*



MISSION: The Strategic Tourism Planning Board is charged by the Tompkins County Legislature with providing oversight and strategic direction for tourism initiatives that *promote economic development* and *enhance the quality of life* in Tompkins County.

## Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Draft Meeting Minutes

1 **Date:** September 25, 2019  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm  
 3 **Location:** Tompkins Co. CVB/Chamber of Commerce, 904 E. Shore Drive, Ithaca NY  
 4

5 **Attendees:**

Name	✓	Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging
Laura Winter Falk	P	At-Large
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large
Connie Kan	E	At-Large
Katie Kutz	P	At-Large
Doug Levine	E	Arts-Culture
Rick Manning	P	At-Large
Mike Mellor	P	At-Large
Cara Nichols	P	Ithaca College
Todd Parlato	P	At-Large
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture
Deb Mohlenhoff	E	TC3
Baruch Whitehead	E	Arts-Culture
Scott Wiggins	E	At-Large
Andy Zepp	P	Recreation
<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>TCAD, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Peggy Coleman</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting 7</i>

Name	✓	Representation
<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Anna Kelles</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
<i>John Spence</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Matthew Yarrow</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Ethan Ash</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jim Brophy</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Erica Frenay</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Henry Granison</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Theresa Hollister-Ball</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Carol Kammen</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Michael Miller</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jon Reis</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Nick Helmholdt</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Staff</i>
<i>Kristin McCarthy</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Staff</i>

8 **Guests:** Elizabeth Classen Ambrose, G. Lincoln Morse, Nick Lambrou, Costa Lambrou, Ronda Roaring, Joey  
 9 Steinhagen

10  
 11 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Chair Kelli Cartmill welcomed everyone to the meeting. Draft  
 12 August minutes were distributed on paper, and their approval was added to the agenda.

13  
 14 **Privilege of the Floor** – Joey Steinhagen, founder and director of Running to Places Theatre Company,  
 15 shared news of the development of the youth troupe’s new home in the Shops at Ithaca Mall and invited  
 16 members to contact him and his staff for a tour of the facilities.

17  
 18 **Action: Approval of July and August 2019 STPB Meeting Minutes** – Brett Bossard moved approval of the  
 19 July and August meeting minutes. Katie Kutz seconded. Motion carried.

20  
 21 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**

22 Kelli shared a brief board recruitment update: two at-large and one arts-culture seats need to be filled.  
 23 Candidates must reside in Tompkins County.

24  
 25 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

26 Arts and Culture Organizational Development Grant cycle will run October 1 through the 31. A workshop  
 27 for perspective applicants is scheduled for October 8.

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)  
Draft Meeting Minutes**

29 **CVB Monthly Report – Peggy Coleman**

30

31 Peggy shared highlights from the report, including spotlight events for Finger Lakes Cider Week and  
32 updated stats for programs like Visitor A2D Journey. JLL just sent her a revised draft of Visitor Profile Study,  
33 which she is reviewing.

34

35 **Community Celebrations Fall 2019 Grant Panel Update – Brett Bossard**

36

37 The committee received nine Community Celebrations grant applications, six of which it recommended for  
38 funding. Two were not recommended for grants, and Nick reached out to applicants with constructive  
39 feedback from the committee. A third applicant was encouraged to reapply in the Spring 2020 grant cycle.

40

41 **Action:** Brett Bossard made a motion to recommend funding of the Fall 2019 slate of Community  
42 Celebrations Grant awards. Ken Jupiter seconded. Motion carried.

43

44 **Presentation: City Harbor public access – City Harbor Waterfront Development Team**

45 Elizabeth Classen Ambrose, G. Lincoln Morse, and Nick and Costa Lambrou, along with other members of  
46 their team, spoke to the STPB about the City Harbor project. In particular, their presentation and the  
47 subsequent Q&A discussion with board members focused on public access to the waterfront and features  
48 of the project of interest to the tourism sector. The City Harbor team was grateful for the extensive  
49 feedback and encouraged board members to reach out post-meeting via email with further thoughts or  
50 comments.

51

52 **Strategic Tourism Plan Steering Committee Update – Nick Helmholdt**

53

54 Committee is integrating contents of Visitor Profile Study into draft plan, which will be ready for review by  
55 entire STPB shortly. Next steps will involve finalizing content. The committee is working to produce a draft  
56 plan ready for public comment by the end of the year.

57

58 **Member Announcements**

59

60 Board members shared news of events and other announcements of interest to the group. Ronda Roaring  
61 spoke briefly about the Lab of Ornithology's Migration Day.

62

63 Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 4:40 pm.

## Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Draft Meeting Minutes

1 **Date:** October 16, 2019  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm  
 3 **Location:** Tompkins Co. CVB/Chamber of Commerce, 904 E. Shore Drive, Ithaca NY  
 4

5 **Attendees:**

Name	✓	Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging
Laura Winter Falk	E	At-Large
Josh Friedman	E	Arts-Culture
Ken Jupiter	E	At-Large
Connie Kan	P	At-Large
Katie Kutz	E	At-Large
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture
Rick Manning	P	At-Large
Mike Mellor	E	At-Large
Cara Nichols	P	Ithaca College
Todd Parlato	E	At-Large
Barbara Romano	E	Cornell University
Monika Roth	E	Agriculture
Deb Mohlenhoff	P	TC3
Baruch Whitehead	A	Arts-Culture
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Andy Zepp	P	Recreation
<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>TCAD, Non-Voting</i>
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Name	✓	Representation
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<i>Anna Kelles</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
<i>John Spence</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Matthew Yarrow</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Ethan Ash</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jim Brophy</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Erica Frenay</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Henry Granison</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Theresa Hollister-Ball</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Carol Kammen</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Michael Miller</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jon Reis</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Nick Helmholdt</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Staff</i>
<i>Kristin McCarthy</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Staff</i>

8 **Guests:** Ronda Roaring, Dan Cogan (City of Ithaca Chief of Staff), Julie Holcombe (City Clerk)  
 9

10 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Kelli welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

11 **Privilege of the Floor** – None

12 **Action: Approval of September 2019 STPB Meeting Minutes** – No quorum.

13  
 14 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**

15 Kelli read a resolution in honor of Sue Stafford and thanked her for her years of service to the STPB. A  
 16 paver bearing Sue’s name will be added to the Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail at a later date.  
 17

18 **Staff Report & Q3 Room Tax Report – Nick Helmholdt**

19 Member applications are due by October 31. Nick provided overview of third-quarter tax report.  
 20 Anna K: Requested anecdotes on lost hotel business to share with legislators. Update was given on  
 21 conference center.  
 22

23 **CVB Monthly Report – Peggy Coleman**

24 Peggy shared highlights from her team’s work over the last month, including a robust sales trip to Albany.  
 25

26 **Strategic Tourism Plan Steering Committee Update – Nick Helmholdt**  
 27  
 28

## **Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Draft Meeting Minutes**

29 Nick gave an overview of background of Strategic Tourism Plan, which is required to be updated  
30 periodically vis-à-vis the County Comprehensive Plan. This version represents the third iteration (2021-  
31 2027). He reviewed the timeline, notable changes since last iteration, and next steps for completion.  
32 Andy Zepp suggested exploring the idea of integrating proposed outdoor recreation grant program with  
33 ACOD/Tourism Grants.  
34

### **Presentation: Special Events in the City of Ithaca – Dan Cogan and Julie Holcomb**

36  
37 Dan Cogan, chief of staff, and Julie Holcomb, city clerk, gave a presentation on the growth of special events  
38 hosted in the City of Ithaca and the impact city services and resources presented by them. Their talk and  
39 the subsequent Q&A discussion covered a range of topics, including public safety and emergency  
40 preparedness, protection of property, impact on non-participating public, limiting city's liability, permitting,  
41 and budgetary concerns.  
42

43 **Member Announcements** – None due to time constraints.  
44

45 Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 5:08 pm.



## November 2019 - CVB Report to the Board

### Marketing:

The Word is CIDER!! As we complete a very hectic month of Cider events and media hosting, Heather, Kendall, and Erin have a lot of great news to report.

### Digital -

Although overall pageview are down, we did see an increase in organic and direct traffic to the site – with an 11% increase in new users. Visit Ithaca planned to pause Google ads in October as a test to see how traffic would be impacted. The site already has good momentum from the summer months and October visitation proves to be strong with a well-established seasonal appeal. In terms of demographics, we saw a slight increase in sessions from NY & PA with the largest increase from NJ & IL. *Fall Foliage Report* page had 728 pageviews with over 50% of the traffic from outside NY. *5 Best Fall Hikes* page had 1,086 pageviews up from 465 in 2018.

	October	September	YTD
Website VisitIthaca.com			
<b>Unique Users 2019</b>	<b>39,159</b>	<b>41,368</b>	<b>356,347</b>
Unique Users 2018	35,191	40,252	331,248
<b>Sessions 2019</b>	<b>48,922</b>	<b>52,944</b>	<b>480,840</b>
Sessions 2018	44,869	51,427	451,278
<b>Pageviews 2019</b>	<b>109,520</b>	<b>125,239</b>	<b>1,218,086</b>
Pageviews 2018	144,900	163,669	1,501,817

### Agricultural Tourism – Website: “Cider” pages (Year over Year to date)

	Jan 1-Oct 30, 2018	Jan 1-Oct, 2019	% change
Page views (see graph)	3085	5760	<b>87</b>
Unique page views	2262	5138	<b>127</b>
Time on Page	1:16	2:44	<b>115</b>
Entrances	340	2270	<b>567</b>

## PR & Communications -

We hosted the following media throughout October:

- **Ria Windcaller** with the **Cider Chat Podcast**, to date resulting in:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> features with Lively Run, Cornell's Mann Library, Beth and I in this episode: <https://ciderchat.com/goatzentocornell/>
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> features interview with Dr. Greg Peck: <https://ciderchat.com/gregpeck/>
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> features **Bellwether Cider since 1996**: <https://ciderchat.com/bellwether/>
- **Heritage Radio Network**. The crew is working on the first few episodes of their new **cider show** in which Ithaca/Tompkins County will be featured.
- **Brad Hunter** with The **Toronto Sun**.
- **Mary Moore Mason**, Editor of **Essentially America**, a top consumer travel publication in the UK and now many other parts of Europe.
- **Kelly Chandler**, writing a piece for Australian travel publication **Get Lost Magazine**.

Additional media coverage includes:

- **Matador Network, 3.8 million UMV** Featured an article written by hosted writer Elizabeth Sherman, "The Best Place to Drink **Cider** this Fall is Ithaca, NY." <https://matadornetwork.com/read/best-ithaca-cideries/>
- Danielle Benjamin, Blogger from **Wanderlust on a Budget** who we hosted in September posted the first of a few articles she's planning for her blog for Ithaca: <https://wanderlust-onabudget.com/glamping-in-ithaca/>
- Visit USA UK posted several blogs on their website including:
  - [Goat Yoga from Lively Run](#)
  - [Feature of Top Instagrammable Spots](#)
  - [Top Hiking Trails](#)
- Escapemaker.com did a Heritage Radio Network interview mentioning the **VisitIthaca Cider Bus!** <https://heritageradionetwork.org/podcast/its-fall-yall-with-bob-lewis-and-caylin-sanders/>
- **Forbes (UMV: 29,788,885; [clip here](#))** included the Finger Lakes region in his roundup of "[Three Exceptional Fall Getaways for Northeast Travelers](#)," citing fall scenery, parks, wineries, and the **Cider Express Bus**.
- **Destination I Do (9,818 UMV)** released the [online version](#) of its [Spring 2019 full print feature](#) on hosting weddings in the Finger Lakes – a result of hosting writer Carolyn Steere last year! The outlet posted its article to [61.2k Twitter followers](#) and to [27k Instagram followers](#) with a link in their IG bio that leads to the article.
- **Working Mother (433.5k UMV)** listed Wizarding Weekend among the "[10 Best Fall Festivals for Families to Visit in 2019](#)."
- **BELLA NYC (636 UMV)** syndicated [last week's Forbes piece](#) in an article naming the Finger Lakes [a quick fall getaway from NYC](#).
- **Travel Channel (UMV: 9,434,757)** included Firelight Camps in its slideshow of the [Prettiest Glamping Spots for a Fall Getaway](#), noting that the camp is open through the first week of November.
- **Glam.com (UMV: 6,744)** named Firelight Camps as one of the [18 Best Glamping Destinations Around the Country](#), touting the region's surrounding outdoor adventures.
- **Thrillest** Featured Ithaca in this article by Carol Cain, "[Best Small Cities in America to Visit for a Weekend](#)."
- **Paste** featured, "[8 Artisanal Cideries you Need to Discover](#)."

### Sales:

Sarah provided a meet and greet for Footprint Tours at the Taughannock Falls Overlook. This was the first company which Sarah met with when joining the CVB in 2013, showcasing a perfect example of the sales cycle for group tours.

Year to date, New World Travel, a receptive operator providing bookings for international clients, has booked 115 room nights, up from 92 room/nights in 2018.

Throughout October, a total of eight new social/wedding leads were sent out with a total estimated economic impact of over \$113,000, and four new sports market leads were created with a total estimated economic impact of over \$34,000.

The search continues to fill the role of the Meetings and Conference Sales Manager position with several interviews scheduled in the next few days.

### Visitor Experience:

October showed the Downtown Visitor Center as flat for the first time this year. It's key to note signage on the building and our new sandwich board went up and out in late September/October. YTD overall touchpoints are showing a slight increase over 2018.

Plans for the 2020 Winter Recess Teacher Festival have kicked off and the Visitor Experience team has been busy selling sponsorships and preparing forms to receive deals, discounts and events. We are thrilled to note Visions Federal Credit Union has signed on as Presenting Sponsor of the 2020 festival. Earlier than usual interest indicates there will be new programming and deals joining the festival this coming year.

Jodi and Rachael attended Destination International's Visitor Services Summit where Jodi served on a panel about training programs and discussed the new Arrival to Departure (A2D) Tourism Training program. Great Guest Relations, advocacy, LGBTQ travel and accessibility were some of the topics of sessions.

By the Numbers:

	<b>Oct 2019</b>	<b>Oct 2018</b>	<b>YOY % Change</b>	<b>YTD 2019</b>	<b>YTD 2018</b>	<b>YOY % Change</b>
Phone	192	225	-15%	1900	1405	+35%
ESD Traffic	486	444	+9%	3719	3802	-2%
DVC Traffic*	665	665	0%	4151	5633	-26%
Taug. Traffic	5761	3854	+49%	35636	36748	-3%
Chats	252	328	-23%	2631	3250	-19%
TG Requests	237	293	-12%	5070	3665	+38%
Off-Site Events	3670	6950	-47%	23451	19785	+18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11263</b>	<b>12759</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>76558</b>	<b>74288</b>	<b>+3%</b>

\*2019 Closed DVC for 2 weeks in April due to construction delay at TCHC.

\*No exterior signs on DVC at TCHC April-mid September 2019. Window signs installed in October.