

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Final Meeting Minutes

1 **Date:** May 15, 2019
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm
 3 **Location:** Tompkins County CVB/Chamber of Commerce, 904 E. Shore Drive, Ithaca NY
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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	P	Arts-Culture
Rick Manning	P	At-Large
Mike Mellor	P	At-Large
Cara Nichols	P	Ithaca College
Todd Parlato	P	At-Large
Barbara Romano	E	Cornell University
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture
Sue Stafford	E	TC3
Baruch Whitehead	A	Arts-Culture
Scott Wiggins	P	At-Large
Andy Zepp	P	Recreation
<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	<i>P</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>P</i>	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
<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>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>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Michael Miller</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jon Reis</i>	<i>E</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

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

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 12 **Privilege of the Floor** – Ronda Roaring gave a “show and tell” presentation on how an umbrella could be
 13 used as a marketing tool for promoting tourism during inclement weather.

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 15 **Action: Approval of the April 17, 2019 STPB Meeting Minutes** – Brett Bossard moved approval of the
 16 April 2019 minutes. Scott Wiggins seconded. Motion carried.

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

19 The chair circulated the sign-up sheet for the Strategic Tourism Plan Focus Area Committees that had been
 20 included in the agenda packet and asked members to ensure they sign up for at least one committee.

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 22 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

23 Presentations for the 2020 Tourism Program Budget requests are scheduled for Wednesday, May 29th. A
 24 draft 2020 budget will be ready for the June STPB meeting. On May 23rd, Nick Helmholdt, Peggy Coleman,
 25 and John Spence will speak before the Housing and Economic Development legislative committee on the
 26 ACOD grant process and Strategic Tourism Plan update.

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CVB April Monthly and Q1 Report – Peggy Coleman

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31 Peggy gave the “Reader’s Digest” version of the April monthly and Q1 report. Highlights include the opening
32 of the Overlook at Taughannock Visitor Center and Downtown Visitor Center in the Tompkins Center for
33 History and Culture.
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Conference Center Feasibility Study Phase II: Gary Ferguson & Peggy Coleman

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36 Gary Ferguson and Peggy updated the group on developments with the Downtown Conference Center
37 Feasibility Study. The discussion covered issues such as facility size (square footage) and space allocation by
38 use (exhibit, meeting, breakout rooms), governance models, analysis of competitive market area,
39 operations, and upfront capital investment and ongoing revenues. Here are a few highlights from their talk:
40

- 41 • Many changes since Hunden Strategic Partners (HSP) completed the first feasibility study in 2017: area
42 hotel supply has increased substantially, and Vecino Group was selected as the preferred developer for
43 the Green Street Garage site.
- 44 • HSP now recommends a bigger conference center be constructed, which means the construction and
45 operational expenses would grow as well.
- 46 • Revisions to their plan include frontage for commercial space on ground floor, and a large ballroom on
47 the second floor.
- 48 • Vecino is still in negotiations with City of Ithaca about Green Street but keenly interested in including a
49 conference center as part of that project.
- 50 • The deadline is approaching for NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative grants, which could help close a
51 potential funding gap.
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53 Peggy’s and Gary’s PowerPoint presentation can be found on the STPB webpage.
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Presentation: Tourism Improvement Districts – Tiffany Gallagher, Civitas

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57 Tiffany Gallagher of the firm Civitas spoke to the group about the steps involved in forming and operating a
58 tourism improvement district (TID). Popular throughout California, which is home to 107 TIDs, and with a
59 presence in some 15 other states, this supplemental funding source allows hotels to charge an assessment
60 fee to fund marketing campaigns and other improvement improvements aimed at attracting new overnight
61 visitors. The assessment fee is passed-through to guests via their hotel bill, collected by the municipal
62 (County) government, which usually takes 1-3% for administrative costs, and then returned to the TID. TIDs
63 are voted into existence by stakeholders and operated through a nonprofit, which must include a board of
64 directors. It is not a voluntary arrangement – once a district passes, every hotelier that meets the required
65 threshold (50 rooms or more) must participate. This model can be used for short-term goals as well, such as
66 funding a conference center. It typically takes 10 months to a year to form a TID.
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STPB Support for Creation of Conference Center in Downtown Ithaca

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69 Looping the conversation back to Peggy and Gary’s earlier presentation, Kelli appealed to the board
70 members to pass a motion in strong support of a conference center for downtown Ithaca as it would help
71 Gary immensely with his application for state funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.
72

73 **Action:** Scott Wiggins made a motion to enthusiastically support the creation of a conference center in
74 downtown Ithaca as already demonstrated through the STPB’s support for funding of two feasibility studies
75 related to this project. Laura Winter Falk seconded the motion, which was passed by the members present.
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78 **Member Announcements**

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- 80 • Matt Yarrow distributed summer schedules for TCAT's Route 22 service.
 - 81 • Ithaca Reggae Fest was voted one of the top 10 reggae festivals in the country by Festicket magazine.
 - 82 • Kilpatrick's is partnering with Ithaca Public Education Initiative for Pub with a Purpose in May and June.

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83 **Strategic Tourism Plan – Focus Area breakout meetings**

84 This agenda item was rescheduled for June due to time constraints.

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86 Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 4:48 pm.