

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

1 **Date:** November 20, 2019
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Tompkins Co. 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	P	At-Large
Katie Kutz	P	Lodging
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	E	Agriculture
Deb Mohlenhoff	P	TC3
Scott Wiggins	P	At-Large
Andy Zepp	A	Recreation
<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	E	<i>TCAD, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Peggy Coleman</i>	P	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
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Name	✓	Representation
<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	P	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Anna Kelles</i>	A	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
<i>John Spence</i>	E	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	P	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Matthew Yarrow</i>	E	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Ethan Ash</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jim Brophy</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Erica Frenay</i>	E	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Henry Granison</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Theresa Hollister-Ball</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Carol Kammen</i>	E	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Michael Miller</i>	E	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jon Reis</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Nick Helmholdt</i>	P	<i>Staff</i>
<i>Kristin McCarthy</i>	P	<i>Staff</i>

8 **Guests:** Kendall Blizzard, Heather Hughes, Ronda Roaring
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10 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Chair Kelli Cartmill welcomed everyone to the meeting.
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12 **Privilege of the Floor** – Public comment was given.
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14 **Action: Approval of September and October 2019 STPB Meeting Minutes** – Laura Winter Falk moved the
 15 Sept. 25 meeting minutes. Scott Wiggins seconded. Motion carried. Cara Nichols moved the Oct. 16
 16 meeting minutes, which Todd Parlato seconded. Motion carried.
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18 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**

19 Kelli introduced and welcomed new TC3 representative Deb Mohlenhoff.
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21 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

22 Bulk of the last few weeks have been spent processing and incorporating public comments and other forms
 23 of feedback into the draft Strategic Tourism Plan update.
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25 **CVB Monthly Report – Peggy Coleman**

26 Peggy ceded most of her time to Kendall Blizzard, who coordinates the Agriculinary Tourism Program at
 27 the CVB, for a presentation on the work she has been doing to promote craft cider in our area vis a vis the
 28 Empire State Development Grant Program. She touched on aspects such as the importance of relationship

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29 building through connections with groups like the New York Cider Association, EscapeMaker, Ourbus (Cider
30 Express discount), Break the Ice Media, and multiple local partners, and increasing brand awareness at
31 events like the Finger Lakes Cider Week, Ithaca Craft Beverage Festival in NYC; Cider Nights @ Ithaca
32 Farmers Markets, and Open Farm Days. Kendall also highlighted some of the media coverage she garnered
33 as part of her outreach efforts, including features in cider-related podcasts, Matador Network website, and
34 Wine Enthusiast. While grant formally ends in March 2020, Kendall hopes to keep cider in the spotlight
35 year-round. Feedback from the group included a suggestion to do a post-visit survey if possible with
36 Ourbus passengers who traveled to Ithaca with the Cider Express discount as well as a query to Kendall on
37 how she thinks local cider producers might help to keep the momentum going once the grant wraps up in
38 March. Kudos was given to Kendall for her fantastic work on this initiative and its many successes.

39 **Membership & Bylaws Committee Update – Scott Wiggins and Todd Parlato**

40 Scott Wiggins and Todd Parlato shared highlights from the committee’s interviews with candidates.

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43 **Action:** Scott Wiggins moved to recommend Erin Marteau (At-large), Kelly Makosch (Recreation), Steven
44 Stull (At-large), and Gregory Mezey (At-large) for appointment to the STPB. Brett Bossard seconded the
45 motion, which carried. **Action:** Scott Wiggins made a motion to reappoint Todd Parlato (At-large), Barbara
46 Romano (Cornell University), Kathleen “Katie” Kutz (Lodging), and Brett Bossard (At-large) to the STPB. Ken
47 Jupiter seconded. Motion carried.

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49 Scott canvassed the members for volunteers for the 2020 Nominating Committee.

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51 **Action:** Doug Levine moved, and Scott Wiggins seconded, the appointment of Katie Kutz, Deb Mohlenhoff,
52 and Cara Nichols to the 2020 Nominating Committee. Motion carried.

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

54 Public comments and other feedback on the draft Strategic Tourism Plan Update have been compiled into
55 an appendix as part of the plan document and did inform some changes to the document itself. Nick
56 highlighted a few of the key edits, including the folding of “Proposed Actions” into each Focus Area of the
57 plan and a new appendix featuring all the Proposed Actions so they are accessible in one place. Other
58 noteworthy changes include a reference to synchronize more closely with other County plans, such as the
59 Economic Development Strategy and Comprehensive Plan; changes to sections on air service and tourism in
60 rural communities; and the addition of a goal under Arts and Culture to elevate the marketing plan for the
61 Tompkins Center for History and Culture. Nick will present the draft Strategic Tourism Plan to the
62 Legislature’s Housing and Economic Development Committee on November 22. Next steps involve
63 coordinating with the CVB on photos and graphics, with the goal of getting it to a designer for layout in
64 January. A red-line version of the draft report is available upon request.

65 **Presentation: Bed and Breakfast and Vacation Rentals of Greater Ithaca -- CANCELLED**

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67 Scheduled guest presenter Inez Vermaas could not make the meeting. However, Kelli led a group discussion
68 on the effects of short-term rentals in our community on the tourism industry as well as other trends in the
69 market. Topics covered include hotel occupancy stays, declining rates of prospective students and their
70 families visiting area schools, the NYS bungalow law, and strategizing how to create a level playing field and
71 get away from a zero-sum game mentality. Suggestion was made to organize a workshop or other outreach
72 event to educate public on this issue, how room tax dollars are used to benefit the community through the
73 work of the County Tourism Program.

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77 **Member Announcements**

- 78 • New (first-year) student move-in date for Ithaca College is Tuesday, Aug. 18. Orientation will run
79 through Sunday, Aug. 23.
- 80 • Expedition Unknown at State Theatre drew an audience of 1,200. Doug helped host Josh Gates with
81 VIP meet-and-greet experience. Of the 100 participants Doug spoke with, only two were from Ithaca.
- 82 • Scott Wiggins gave kudos to Ithaca College and Dan Smalls Presents for bringing Bob Dylan to town.
- 83 • Gary distributed guides for the Winter Light Festival, which will run December 5-15.
- 84
- 85 Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 5:08 pm.