

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

1 **Date:** October 20, 2021
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Virtual Meeting – Zoom Video Conference

4
 5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Megan Barber</i>	P	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	<i>Peggy Coleman</i>	P	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Laura Winter Falk	P	At-Large	<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	E	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Josh Friedman	E	Arts-Culture	<i>Henry Granison</i>	P	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Alexis Grimm	P	Lodging	<i>Heather McDaniel</i>	P	<i>IEAD, Non-Voting</i>
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large	<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	P	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Connie Kan	E	At-Large	<i>Vacant</i>		<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Wendy Kobler	P	Ithaca College	<i>Jim Brophy</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Erica Frenay</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Carol Kammen</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Rick Manning	E	At-Large	<i>Michael Miller</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	<i>Jon Reis</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Todd Parlato	E	At-Large	<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	Nick Helmholdt	P	Tourism Program Director
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture	Kristin McCarthy	P	TCDPS
Deb Mohlenhoff	A	TC3			
Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture			

7 **Guests:** Kurt Anderson, Mila Fournier, Jordan Herson, Arthur Keith, Patty Poist, Chuck Tauck

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 9 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Chair Kelli Cartmill called meeting to order at
 10 3:00pm.

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 12 **Action: Approval of September 2021 STPB Meeting Minutes** – The draft September meeting
 13 minutes were approved as submitted by members present.

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 15 **Privilege of the Floor** – None

16
 17 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**
 18 Kelli thanked members who volunteered to serve on the 2022 Nominating Committee and then
 19 asked board to vote to appoint them.

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 21 **Action:** Doug Levine moved to appoint Monika Roth, Greg Mezey, and Ken Jupiter to the 2022
 22 STPB Nominating Committee. Steven Stull seconded the motion, which was passed by the
 23 members present.

24
 25 **Staff Report & Q3 Room Tax Report – Nick Helmholdt**

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26 Nick introduced and welcomed the board's new Lodging representative, Alexis Zaharis Grimm. He
27 next shared updates from the Tourism Program and highlights from the third quarter room tax
28 report. Room tax collections for Q3 were above the amount forecasted, tax exempt sales were
29 way down, demand for smaller lodging (including short term rentals) continues to grow, despite
30 new 5% across the board tax rate, and most pandemic-related issues with tax delinquency have
31 been resolved. In addition, Nick will give a presentation on short term rentals to the Housing and
32 Economic Development Committee later this month, and pre-applications for ACOD grants are due
33 October 28.

34

Report: Community Celebrations Grant Review Committee – Carol Kammen

36 Carol Kammen, chair of the Community Celebrations Grant Review Committee and County
37 Historian, provided an overview of the applications submitted in this round and thanked her
38 fellow committee members and County staff for their support of the Community Celebrations
39 program. A total of \$7,050 in grants was awarded, with \$2,090 in unspent funds remaining.

40

41 **Action:** Kelly Makosch made a motion, which Steven Stull seconded, to recommend that the eight
42 2021 Fall Community Celebrations grant awards be approved for funding. Doug Levine abstained.
43 Motion carried.

44

Report: Membership & Bylaws Committee – Doug Levine

46 Doug Levine, on behalf of the Membership & Committee, gave a brief report on their interview
47 with prospective at-large candidate Marian Levy Wilson and presented her for consideration for
48 membership by the full STPB.

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50 **Action:** Doug Levine moved to recommend Marian Levy Wilson (At-large) for appointment to the
51 STPB. Ken Jupiter seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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Report: Tourism Recovery Committee – Kelli Cartmill and Jordan Herson

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55 Kelli introduced Jordan Herson, the CVB's marketing and communications specialist, who shared
56 the "Tompkins Together" winter campaign in support of hospitality workers in our community and
57 asked STPB members for feedback. Her presentation and the subsequent Q&A discussion covered
58 various topics, including plans for distribution, approach to campaign tone and branding, potential
59 collateral such as posters, billboards, and coasters, synergies between print and social media
60 channels, logo design, and launch dates.

61

62 Next, members discussed repurposing the unspent \$2,950 in Fall 2021 Community Celebrations
63 grant funding for initiatives related to the Tourism Recovery Committee's winter marketing
64 campaign. Nick Helmholdt explained that the County Historian position will be funded through the
65 County tax levy moving forward and not from the Tourism Program, thereby leaving an additional
66 \$7,000 in room tax dollars to help make up for the temporary shift in Community Celebrations
67 grants.

68

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69 **Action:** Brett Bossard moved, and Wendy Kobler seconded, to recommend that \$2,950 in unspent
70 funds from the Fall 2021 Community Celebrations grant cycle be repurposed to support the CVB's
71 winter marketing campaign. Motion carried by members present.

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73 **Report: Convention and Visitors Bureau – Peggy Coleman and Jodi LaPierre**

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75 Peggy shared highlights from the CVB's third quarter report. While an uptick in COVID-19 cases
76 tied to the Delta variant hindered some activities, such as motor coach tours and in-person
77 meetings and conferences, leisure travel continues to trend well as do digital engagement figures,
78 web stats, and visitation to the Overlook at Taughannock. The marketing team, which is back to
79 full-time staffing, continues to rock, hosting travel writers to the area and planning and executing
80 events for New York Cider Week. In other news, ground-breaking was held for Downtown
81 Community Conference Center and CVB's new communications manager, Rob Montana, has
82 joined the team.

83

84 Next, Jodi LaPierre, director of Visitor Experience for the CVB, gave a presentation on the myriad
85 ways she and her team continue to strive to provide excellent customer service to visitors to our
86 community as well as support various other areas of the CVB's mission to support and grow
87 tourism in Tompkins County. She also recognized colleagues in the CVB's sales and marketing
88 divisions who stepped up to help out during COVID-19 related staffing shortages. Highlights
89 included public relations opportunities, travel guide requests, support for students and parents
90 touring and relocating to area campuses, accessibility concerns at area venues, details about the
91 extensive training required of Visitor Experience staff, data regarding sales of branded
92 merchandising, and more. Her talk also dovetailed into a discussion among members regarding
93 wayfinding and possibility of refocusing on that part of the strategic tourism plan in 2022.
94 Attendees thanked Jodi and her team for their tireless efforts and saluted her for 25 years of
95 service to the CVB and institutional knowledge.

96

97 **Member Announcements** – News was shared regarding various items, including the TCAT to Trails
98 project, initiatives of the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) including plans to collaborate with the NYS
99 Department of Environmental Conservation and other stakeholders to purchase the NYSEG Bell
100 Station property in the Town of Lansing, events at the State Theatre, and an update on relocating
101 the CVB/Tompkins Chamber of Commerce offices.

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103 **Adjournment** – Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 4:30pm.

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