

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

1 **Date:** February 16, 2022
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Virtual Meeting – Zoom Video Conference

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5 **Attendees:**

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

6 **Guests:** Rosemary Avila, Deirdre Kurzweil, Jeremiah Swain

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8 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Chair Brett Bossard called meeting to order at 3:02pm. No
 9 changes to the agenda.

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11 **Action: Approval of January 2022 STPB Meeting Minutes** – The draft January minutes were approved as
 12 submitted (motion by Kelly Makosch, second by Marian Levy Wilson). Motion carried.

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14 **Privilege of the Floor** – No one spoke.

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16 **Chair’s Report – Brett Bossard**

17 Brett shared a few thoughts in memory of former STPB member John Spence, who recently passed away.
 18 The group then observed a moment of silence in honor of John.

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20 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

21 Nick updated members on the spring 2022 round of tourism grants, sharing the following details: A free
 22 virtual grant workshop was held for applicants, with 20 people in attendance, and applications for Tourism
 23 Project, Tourism Marketing, and Community Celebrations Grants are due February 23. He also shared quick
 24 updates on the Tompkins Outdoors grant program and recruitment for a vacant at-large seat on the board.
 25 Members were encouraged to reach out with recommendations for candidates.

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27 **Presentation: Finger Lakes Land Trust Tompkins County Updates – Andy Zepp, Finger Lakes Land Trust**

28 Andy Zepp, executive director of the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) and former STPB member, shared
 29 highlights from FLLT’s priority projects in Tompkins County and adjacent areas. In terms of an overarching
 30 vision, he talked about FLLT working to help implement the County’s Priority Trails Strategy, which was

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31 produced by the Department of Planning and Sustainability roughly 10 years ago. Projects covered in his
32 presentation included FLLT's work as a facilitator for negotiations between New York State and NYSEG in
33 the acquisition of the Bell Station property in Town of Lansing as well as their possible involvement in the
34 acquisition of Camp Barton, which is currently owned by the Boy Scouts but may be purchased by New York
35 State and managed by local municipalities. He also reported on developments with other FLLT trails and
36 preserves, especially efforts to fortify the Emerald Necklace, highlighting an increased need for trail
37 maintenance and the extensive work done by FLLT volunteers. Q&A discussion touched on various topics,
38 including need to balance conservation/preservation concerns with tourism and visitation; methods for
39 counting visitors to FLLT preserves; improving accessibility at trail sites; outreach tools, such as the Go
40 Finger Lakes website; and questions regarding FLLT funding and operational protocols.

Arts and Culture Organizational Development (ACOD) Grant Review Committee – Megan Barber

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42 Megan thanked the STPB for its support of the ACOD program. She then provided a quick overview of the
43 program's history and evolution in recent years, before sharing a few details on the grant panel and grant
44 review process. All of the applications submitted were recommended for some level of funding by the grant
45 review committee. Total funding available was \$255,850; total amount of funding requested was \$424,051.

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48 **Action:** Ken Jupiter made a motion, which Steven Stull seconded, to recommend that the Arts and Culture
49 Organizational Development Awards for 2022 be approved by the Tompkins County Legislature. Motion
50 carried by members present, with Brett Bossard and Doug Levine abstaining.

Budget Committee Report – Josh Friedman

Revised Budget and Surplus Policy

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56 Josh provided an overview of revisions made to the Tourism Program's current budget and surplus policy.
57 Changes include increasing reserve to 10 percent and adding a third clause regarding exceptional
58 circumstances if surplus funds exceed \$300,000. There were no questions or comments.

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60 **Action:** Marian Levy Wilson moved, with a second by Doug Levine, to adopt the revised Tourism Program
61 budget and surplus policy. Motion carried by members present.

Amendment to 2022 Tourism Program Budget

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65 Josh led the group through a discussion of the proposed amendment to the 2022 Tourism Program budget
66 with surplus funds from 2021. Highlights included using \$120,000 to fund reserve up to 10%; \$250,000 to
67 restore funding for wayfinding; \$75,000 for market evaluation; and \$220,000 for Strategic Tourism
68 Implementation Grant program. Q&A discussion covered various topics, including Visitor Profile Study,
69 budget details, benefits of wayfinding. Nick Helmholdt clarified that the final budget adjustment resolution
70 will be subject to approval of the Finance Department's certification of the total 2021 surplus amount. If
71 the surplus amount comes in below the estimate shown in the memo, then each line item would be funded
72 sequentially in the amount presented in the memo until funds are depleted.

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74 **Action:** A motion was made by Josh Friedman, with a second by Kelli Cartmill, to accept an amendment to
75 the 2022 Tourism Program budget with the existing fund balance prioritizing expenditures in the following
76 order: fund reserve to 10 percent, wayfinding signage implementation, market evaluation, and Strategic
77 Tourism Implementation grants. Motion carried with 13 members voting in favor and one member (Steven
78 Stull) opposed.

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80 **Member Announcements** – Members shared items of interest. These included a co-production between
81 Opera Ithaca and Ithaca College, Ithaca Loves Teachers, 24th Annual Downtown Chili Cook-Off, employment
82 opportunities at State Theatre and Downtown Ithaca Local Development Corporation, and Creatives
83 Rebuild New York.

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85 **Adjournment** – Chair Brett Bossard adjourned the meeting at 4:33pm.