

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

1 **Date:** Sept. 21, 2022  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm  
 3 **Location:** Ithaca Tompkins International Airport Large Conference Room

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 5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Brett Bossard	E	Arts-Culture	Teri Tarshus	A	At-Large
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	Marian Levy Ware	P	At-Large
Laura Winter Falk	P	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	Ithaca College	<i>Heather McDaniel</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>IAED, Non-Voting</i>
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Patty Poist</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Rick Manning	P	At-Large	<i>Carol Kammen</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	<i>Michael Miller</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Deb Mohlenhoff	P	TC3	<i>Jon Reis</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Barbara Romano	E	Cornell University	<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Monika Roth	E	Agriculture	<i>Chuck Tauck</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture	Nick Helmholdt	<i>P</i>	Tourism Program Director
Jeremiah Swain	P	At-Large	Kristin McCarthy	P	County Staff

6 **Guests:** David Harker, Suzanne Smith Jablonski

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 8 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda/Privilege of the Floor** – Vice Chair Doug Levine called the  
 9 meeting to order at 3:11pm. No changes to the agenda. No one spoke during privilege of the floor. He  
 10 shared news about Brett Bossard’s new job as executive director of Ithaca College’s Office of Alumni and  
 11 Family Engagement.

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 13 **Action: Approval of July 2022 STPB Meeting Minutes** – The draft July 2022 minutes were approved as  
 14 submitted (moved by Josh Friedman, seconded by Kelli Cartmill).

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 16 **Staff Report** – *Nick Helmholdt*  
 17 Nick updated group on recently closed grant cycles. Fewer applications were received for Community  
 18 Celebrations, Tourism Project, and Tourism Marketing Grants than have typically been submitted in  
 19 previous rounds, which will likely leave a fund balance in those categories. Tourism Capital Grant requests,  
 20 however, surpassed available funding substantially. Nick also reported on his presentation to the County  
 21 Legislature’s Expanded Budget Committee.

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 23 **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee** – *Ken Jupiter*  
 24 Ken provided an overview of revisions made to the STPB Diversity Statement and committee’s review of  
 25 answers to the experience and demographics matrix. The matrix was designed to help get a sense of the  
 26 board’s strengths and weaknesses in these two areas and identify ways to improve the latter, such as by  
 27 recruiting younger and/or more culturally diverse members. Ken’s report and the subsequent discussion  
 28 covered several topics including terminology (e.g., difference between “expertise” versus “experience,”  
 29 adding or redefining certain categories (e.g., folding “agriculture” under “food/beverage”), usefulness of  
 30 matrix as a recruitment tool for grant panels, municipal diversity, and possible next steps.

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**Action: Adopt Revised STPB Diversity Statement**

Josh Friedman made a motion, which Kelli Cartmill seconded, to adopt the revised STPB Diversity Statement. Motion carried.

**Report: Membership & Bylaws Committee – Doug Levine**

Doug reported that Ithaca College has nominated David Harker, director of civic engagement, to serve as their representative on the board. David was present at meeting and introduced himself, sharing a bit about his professional and personal background. Nick explained the appointment process for higher education representatives. David is scheduled to be appointed by the County Legislature in early October.

**Ithaca Downtown Conference Center (IDCC): Marketing Overview – Lisa Conarton, Conference Sales Manager, Ithaca/Tompkins CVB**

After sharing a few details about her 25 years-plus in hospitality and sales and operations, Lisa updated the group on progress and preparations being made in terms of conference sales and the IDCC. These include an important focus on awareness building and keeping momentum growing through frequent updates to stakeholders and potential clients, relationship building through trade show attendance (including appointment-based shows, which allow for meeting one-on-one with potential clients), and as time draws closer to the conference center’s opening, continuing to develop a robust marketing and sales toolkit. She shared the conference center profile sheet and the splash page for the conference center website, which is under development and will include features such as interactive floor plans and virtual tours. Her report and the Q&A discussion touched on several items, including opportunities to pre-sell certain events or private functions, target date for accepting requests for proposals, connecting with SUNY, networking with the different schools and departments that comprise Ithaca College, Cornell and TC3, differences between conference centers and convention centers, cannabis-related events, sweetheart deals for winter, promoting Ithaca as an all-seasons destination, and more.

**Presentation: 2022 Community Arts Partnership (CAP) Annual Report – Megan Barber**

Megan updated the group on CAP’s work in 2022. As part of those efforts, she and her colleagues spent time connecting with individual artists and arts organizations throughout the county to see how they have been faring. Challenges mentioned include unpredictable attendance at events, requiring help with marketing, financial challenges, and staff retention. However, also reported was a sense of strengthened community connections, reinvigorated creativity, and excitement about returning to live events. After giving a quick primer on CAP’s history and mission, she shared highlights related to some of the CAP-administered programs funded by room tax dollars, including Market the Arts, ACOD, and public art grants, as well as CAP partnership programs, such as Spring Writes Literary Program and the Greater Ithaca Art Trail, and upcoming CAP initiatives like the Arts Leaders Mini Retreat and important fall grant deadlines. Discussion covered several topics, including Community Recovery Fund, Cherry Arts and Arthaus, need for both digital and print outreach materials depending on visitor demographic, and more.

**Member Announcements**

Doug suggested board meet via Zoom in October and then consider meeting in person in November. Marian offered to explore hosting at the Statler for Nov. 16 meeting. Members shared news about sold-out shows at the State Theatre, Opera Ithaca Festival, Friends of Stewart Park and Wharton Museum Party for the Arts fund-raiser, and more.

**Adjournment** – Vice Chair Doug Levine adjourned the meeting at 4:43pm.