

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

1 **Date:** July 31, 2024
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm
 3 **Location:** Chamber of Commerce, 124 Brindley Street, Ithaca/Via Zoom

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5 **Attendees:**

| Member | | Representation | Member | | Representation |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Brett Bossard | P | Arts-Culture | Steven Stull | P | Arts-Culture |
| Laura Winter Falk | E | At-Large | Teri Tarshus | P | At-Large |
| Jeff Golden | A | Ithaca College | <i>Megan Barber</i> | P | <i>CAP, Non-Voting</i> |
| Alexis Zaharis Grimm | P | Lodging | Peggy Coleman | P | Chamber, Non-Voting |
| Ken Jupiter | P | At-Large | <i>Heather McDaniel</i> | P | <i>IAED, Non-Voting</i> |
| Jenna Kain | E | Lodging | <i>Frank Doldo</i> | P | <i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i> |
| Doug Levine | P | Arts-Culture | <i>Nan Rohrer</i> | E | <i>DIA, Non-Voting</i> |
| Marian Levy Ware | P | At-Large | <i>Mike Sigler</i> | A | <i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i> |
| Kelly Makosch | P | Recreation | <i>Jennifer Tavares</i> | A | <i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i> |
| Rick Manning | P | At-Large | <i>Michael Miller</i> | E | <i>Associate Member</i> |
| Greg Mezey | P | At-Large | <i>Jon Reis</i> | E | <i>Associate Member</i> |
| Bethany Parisi | P | Arts-Culture | <i>Chuck Tauck</i> | P | <i>Associate Member</i> |
| Scott Riesenberger | P | TC3 | Nick Helmholdt | P | Tourism Program Director |
| Barbara Romano | P | Cornell University | Kristin McCarthy | P | County Staff |
| Monika Roth | P | Agriculture | | | |

6 **Guests:** Jodi LaPierre, Rob Montana, Erin Rafalowski, Jay Richardson, Suzanne Smith Jablonski, Chris
 7 Stephany

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9 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda/Privilege of the Floor** – Chair Brett Bossard opened the
 10 meeting at 3:03pm. No privilege of the floor. No changes to agenda.

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12 **Action: Approval of June 2024 STPB Draft Minutes** – The draft June 2024 minutes were approved (moved
 13 by Ken Jupiter, seconded by Barbara Romano) as submitted.

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15 **Chair’s Report** – *Brett Bossard*

16 Brett thanked everyone for coming out on a summer day and queued up Nick for the staff report.

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18 **Staff Report/Q2 2024 Room Tax Report** – *Nick Helmholdt*

19 After introducing new TC3 representative Scott Riesenberger, Nick shared updates on grant applications
 20 for fall tourism programs and an upcoming workshop. Frank reported his positive experience hosting a
 21 meeting at the new downtown conference center, noting excellent facilities and helpful staff. He
 22 mentioned limited restaurant capacity downtown for large groups as the only challenge. Nick provided an
 23 overview of the room tax report, with figures on pace for the 2024 budget. Hotels are regaining market
 24 share, with larger properties seeing increased tax payments. The group asked questions about the report,
 25 including the impact of events and weather on revenue and the shift in revenues between 2022 and 2023.
 26 They also discussed the performance of smaller lodging establishments and B&Bs.

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28 **Presentation: CVB 2024 Mid-year Report** – *Peggy Coleman*

29 Peggy and her team shared highlights from the Convention and Visitors Bureau's mid-year report, offering
 30 insights into website performance, user interactions, the Book Direct widget, and other items.

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31 The marketing team presented their recent achievements, including the launch of a new arts pass (similar
32 to Waterfalls Challenge pass), partnerships with Experience Portland and the Regional Tourism Council,
33 and collaborations with Seneca and Cayuga Counties. They also discussed plans to boost social media
34 engagement and create innovative video content. Jodi La Pierre, director of Visitor Experience, addressed
35 challenges posed by high temperatures on operations at the Taughannock Visitors Center. Group discussed
36 various topics, including the potential of TikTok for reaching younger travelers and the advantages of using
37 geolocating features.

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2025 Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA) Designation

40 Peggy presented a resolution requesting that the Tompkins County Legislature approve the Ithaca
41 Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau as the official Tourism Promotion Agency for Tompkins
42 County for 2025. She explained that the NYS Tourism Promotion Act requires the legislature of each county
43 to appoint such an agency as the applicant and recipient of state tourism matching funds.

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45 **Action:** Ken Jupiter made a motion, which Doug Levine seconded, to recommend the Tompkins County
46 Legislature approve the designation of the Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau as the
47 2025 Tourism Promotion Agency for Tompkins County. Motion carried.

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Member Announcements

50 Members shared news and events of interest. These included a concert and dance performance at
51 Triphammer Arts, Ithaca Artists Market, Music in the Hollow, Gallery Night, Movies in the Park, happy hour
52 and other offerings at Coltivare, tours of the Southworks project site on South Hill, and more.

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54 **Adjournment** – Chair Brett Bossard adjourned the meeting at 3:58pm.