

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Draft Meeting Minutes – July 2015**

1 **Date:** July 15, 2015
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** CVB
 4
 5

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large	Christy Agnese	✓	Ithaca College
Ian Golden	A	Recreation	Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Ethan Ash	E	Arts-Culture	Josh Friedman	✓	Arts-Culture
John Gutenberger	✓	Cornell	John Spence	✓	CAP, Non-Voting
Lynnette Scofield	E	Lodging	Bruce Stoff	✓	CVB, Non-Voting
Kelli Cartmill	✓	Lodging	Dwight Mengel	A	Transportation, Non-Voting
Rita Rosenberg	A	Agriculture	Gary Ferguson	✓	DIA, Non-Voting
David Blake	✓	At-Large	Jennifer Tavares	✓	Chamber, Non-Voting
Andy Zepp	E	At-Large	Martha Armstrong	✓	TCAD, Non-Voting
Stephen Nunley	A	At-Large	Will Burbank	A	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Steve Hugo	E	At-Large	Beverly Baker		Associate Member
Ken Jupiter	✓	At-Large	Carol Kammen		Associate Member
Mike Mellor	✓	At-Large	Jon Reis		Associate Member
Anne Gossen	✓	Arts-Culture	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Sue Stafford	✓	TC3	Jennifer Turner	✓	Staff

7

8 **Also in attendance:**

9
 10 **Meeting Agenda**

- 11 1) Opener
 12 2) June STPB Meeting Minutes
 13 • ACTION – Approve Meeting Minutes
 14 3) Chair’s Report – Sue Perlgut
 15 4) Staff Report – Tom Knipe
 16 5) Privilege of the Floor
 17 6) 2016 Tourism Program Tax Budget
 18 ACTION – Vote to recommend 2016 Tourism Program Budget
 19 7) P&E Committee Report
 20 ACTION – Vote on Strategic Tourism Implementation funding recommendation for Wayfinding
 21 8) CAP Annual Report – John Spence - PRESENTATION
 22 9) Committee Project Check-ins
 23 10) CVB brief report – Bruce Stoff
 24 11) Announcements
 25

26 **The meeting was called to order** at 3:01 PM.

27
 28 **Opener** – Sue Perlgut opened the meeting by presenting 12 tourism related questions to members of the
 29 STPB. Members with the most correct answers were rewarded with prizes.
 30

31 **Chair’s Report** – Sue Perlgut reported on the list of training opportunities and ideas created by Sue
 32 Stafford and the CVB. She went on to suggest a training opportunity with a local consultant who specializes
 33 in marketing and branding for cities and neighborhoods. Training with the board is scheduled for October.
 34

35 **STPB Mid-year Survey** – Sue Perlgut provided a mid-year survey to board members for feedback related
 36 to satisfaction with meetings, committee interests, and board goals. Members were asked to answer the
 37 questions and hand in the survey with their names signed. She went on to note that a Higher Education
 38 Taskforce will be forming in the near future.
 39

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40 **Update On Higher Education** – Christy Agnese reported that Ithaca College has been looking to create
41 alternative revenue streams. A plan to offer dorm use to non-college-affiliated events or conferences in the
42 summer months was discussed. These activities would qualify for the collection of room tax dollars. Ithaca
43 College will register with County Finance to collect the room tax to potentially begin hosting events in the
44 summer of 2016.

45
46 **June 2015 STPB meeting minutes were approved** with no changes.

47
48 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe announced his upcoming vacation plans and noted the course he will be
49 teaching on Sustainable Tourism and Planning at Cornell University. Tom announced Ed McMahon's
50 presentation on September 3rd, and went on to thank Gary Ferguson of the Downtown Ithaca Alliance and
51 Form Ithaca for their additional support for his downtown talk. The downtown talk will take place at
52 Cinnemapolis at 12:30 on 9/3. A presentation on sustainable tourism will take place the same day at 4:30
53 pm, in Millstein Hall. Consolidated Funding Applications will be submitted for the Blueway Trail. The City of
54 Ithaca has voted in favor of funding in the amount of \$20,000 for the project. In August, new funding
55 availability will be posted for New Tourism Initiatives and Community Celebrations. Those applications are
56 due September 18th (editor's note: now 9/21)

57
58 **2016 Tourism Program Tax Budget** – Sue Perlcut noted the 2016 Tourism Program Budget
59 recommendations included in the agenda packet. A motion was made by David Blake to recommend the
60 2016 Tourism Program Budget, seconded by Anne Kellerman. The budget was approved unanimously by
61 voice vote.

62
63 **P&E Committee Report** – Ken Jupiter reported that the P&E Committee met and set the agenda for next
64 year. Their committee will focus on several additional aspects of the Strategic Tourism Plan, including
65 sports tourism, outdoor recreation, higher education and tourism, and sustainability tourism. Plans for follow
66 up on both the Wine and Ticket Center reports are underway. The plans will focus on analyzing thresholds
67 for scrutiny, and setting parameters for levels of project funding. Draft plans for Agri-culinary tourism and
68 Heritage tourism will be reviewed at P&E level, followed by the approval of the full board. The
69 implementation of Wayfinding is another priority of the group. The opportunity to apply for state funding was
70 noted and will require a county portion out of tourism funding in order to secure matching funds from the
71 state.

72
73 Jennifer Tavares reported on the multiple presentations she has made to stakeholders in order to seek
74 funding for the Wayfinding Plan. Time constraints, funding matches from key stakeholders, as well as the
75 number of applicants that are requesting funds from the state were noted concerns with submitting a strong
76 application. Another meeting will take place with the City of Ithaca at committee level in order have a
77 commitment for support in this project. The Town of Ithaca has passed a resolution to support the plan for
78 up to \$35,000. Discussions are ongoing with both Cornell University and Ithaca College for support with the
79 plan. Jennifer noted that plans for a significant reduction in the \$1,200,000 budget by way of in-kind
80 donations and installations between both the City of Ithaca and the County She went on to go over the
81 projections for different scenarios and provided an overview of the Wayfinding Plan via PowerPoint
82 presentation. To view the full plan visit: [http://www.tompkinschamber.org/wp-](http://www.tompkinschamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/TompkinsWayfinding_Ph1and2-final_sm-file-size.pdf)
83 [content/uploads/2014/07/TompkinsWayfinding_Ph1and2-final_sm-file-size.pdf](http://www.tompkinschamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/TompkinsWayfinding_Ph1and2-final_sm-file-size.pdf)

84
85 **Vote on Strategic Tourism Implementation Funding Recommendation for Wayfinding** – Members
86 discussed the re-wording the first sentence of the last paragraph of STPB Resolution No. 1 of 2015
87 included in the agenda, the recommendation to remove “confirms its intention”, to replace with “The STPB
88 hereby recommends”, and to replace “contingent upon an award of funds from the 2015 CFA”, with
89 “contingent upon securing sufficient funds”. David Blake made the motion to approve STPB Resolution No.
90 1 of 2015 with the amended changes, seconded by Ken Jupiter. **Vote on Resolution: Yes: 12 No: 0**

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(See attached resolution)

CAP Annual Report – John Spence, Executive Director of Community Arts Partnership (CAP) announced that CAP is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. He went on to report that over the years CAP has distributed over \$3,400,000 to local artists around Tompkins County. In 2014 \$261,000 was distributed to local artists and arts organizations; of which \$188,000 was ACOD funds. The New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA) distributed \$72,000 which is used to fund programs such the Arts and Artist Programs, Arts in the Classroom, and Arts in Community. In 2015, NYSCA grants were awarded to the Cayuga Vocal Ensemble, Center for Transformative Action, Danby Community Council, Downtown Ithaca Alliance, and the Dryden Recreational Department. He went on to note the diverse group of programs that include decentralization grants which are distributed to outside organizations. Due to the success of the Strategic Opportunity Stipend grant, an increase was made to \$24,000 from the \$10,000 in the previous year. This grant was developed by a family foundation that aims to provide support to artists with new initiatives. The Greater Ithaca Arts Trail was noted as one of the most well-known programs that takes place in the fall and was named the most popular place outside New York City to see art by the Huffington Post. The Artist Market event will take over the Farmers Market on July 24th, and Spring Writes 4 day workshop will return in the spring. John spoke about the first Friend of the Arts award that was presented to the late Stu Stein last year, and noted that this year it will take place at La Tourelle on September 24th. Branding, not-for-profit funding streams, and limited money for funding were noted challenges of the Community Arts Partnership. Potential opportunities include promotion in the arts, the rejuvenation of Ithaca Events.com, and art for all ages and underserved communities. John asked board members for feedback and suggestions. Members discussed the changes in the program and the economic impact of the Artists Market.

CVB 2015 Report – Bruce Stoff reported that both room occupancy and demand were up 2.7% and that revenue was up 4.5% through the month of May. Beta issues with the website will be a high priority in the next few weeks. Mobile use of the website increased to 36% from last years 17%. Six motor coach operators were brought in for the Familiarization Tours that led to 66 appointments. Chat sessions reached almost 3,000 sessions. Travel guide requests and phone calls declined, while downtown walk-ins increased by 19%. Bruce went on to discuss the outreach at campuses by the sales department and made note of the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council that he chairs. A \$100,000 grant was awarded to conduct regional research; a stakeholder's group meeting will take place July 29th.

Announcements – Sue Perlcut announced that the next STPB meeting will take place September 23rd. Gary Ferguson announced the Commons Celebration Weekend on August 28th and 29th. The celebration will feature a ribbon cutting, talks, music, free movies, and children's activities. Jennifer Tavares announced the Cayuga Waterfront Trail Opening on August 30th from 4-8 pm.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant
Tompkins County Planning Department

Next Meeting Scheduled

Wednesday September 16, 2015

STRATEGIC TOURISM PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, July 15, 2015

STPB Resolution No. 1 of 2015: Support for Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) and Commitment to Recommend use of Local Hotel Room Occupancy Tax Funds as County Share of Local Matching Funds for the Tompkins County Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Project

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce received a \$62,970 Strategic Tourism Implementation grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program, upon recommendation of the STPB, to develop a plan to create a more comprehensive and coherent signage system throughout Tompkins County, and

WHEREAS, the program includes a comprehensive gateway and municipal signage program; standard NYS DOT signage; signage “districts” designated to help visitors, parents, and our transient residential population navigate through Ithaca and Tompkins County; and vehicular directional signage to parks, trails, Cornell University, Ithaca College, and other important visitor destinations, and

WHEREAS, the proposed plan will serve as a key element of a strong tourism infrastructure in Tompkins County, enhancing the ease of navigation for our nearly 900,000 annual visitors to key attractions and destinations while also supporting the development of a sense of place as one moves through the county, and

WHEREAS, the State of York has announced the availability of funds through the 2015 State of New York Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce and its Foundation have been working with numerous stakeholders, including the County, City, Cornell University, Ithaca College, and other municipalities to pull together a local funding contribution match to the state CFA application, and

WHEREAS, currently there is a lack of consistency in physical design and frequency of signs and no conceptual connection between types of signage, and improving wayfinding signage is identified as a priority in the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins Legislature has charged the STPB with providing oversight and strategic direction for use of the County’s nearly \$2.5 million dollars in annual hotel room occupancy tax funds, and the STPB develops recommendations to the Legislature for room tax budget allocations and tourism grants funded by room tax, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has established a dedicated funding source for implementing the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan, known as Strategic Tourism Implementation Grants, for which implementation of the Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan is an eligible project, and

WHEREAS, \$150,000 is budgeted for Strategic Tourism Implementation Grants in the 2015 Tompkins County room tax budget, an additional \$165,000 is identified for this line in the

preliminary 2016 budget, and additional funds in this line are expected to be available in 2017, and

WHEREAS, and the STPB views this project as a funding priority for Strategic Tourism Implementation funds, *now, therefore, be it*

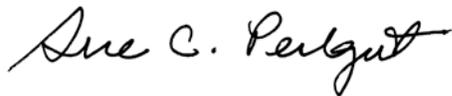
RESOLVED, that the STPB hereby recommends allocating up to \$150,000 in Strategic Tourism Implementation funding for the Tompkins County Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Project with funding spread over the three years of 2015, 2016 and 2017 in approximately equal amounts of \$50,000 each year, contingent upon securing sufficient funds to complete the project, with the final funding formula to be determined based on stakeholder participation and total project costs, and also contingent on final confirmation of awards made by the Tompkins County Legislature.

Date: July 15, 2015

Moved: David Blake **Seconded:** Ken Jupiter

Votes for: 12 **Votes against:** 0 **Abstentions:** 0

In Witness Whereof,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue C. Perlmut". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sue Perlmut, Chair

Strategic Tourism Planning Board