

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Meeting Minutes Draft – July 2014**

1 **Date:** July 16, 2014
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** CVB / Chamber of Commerce
 4
 5

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large	Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Ian Golden	✓	Recreation	Susie Monagan	✓	Arts-Culture
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture	<i>John Spence</i>	✓	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
John Gutenberger	✓	Cornell	<i>Bruce Stoff</i>	✓	<i>CVB, Non-Voting</i>
Lynette Scofield	✓	Lodging	<i>Dwight Mengel</i>	A	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging	<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	✓	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture	<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	A	<i>TCAD, Non-Voting</i>
Andy Zepp	✓	At-Large	<i>Will Burbank</i>	✓	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Stephen Nunley	✓	At-Large	<i>Beverly Baker</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Steve Hugo	✓	At-Large	<i>Carol Kammen</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Ken Jupiter	✓	At-Large	<i>Jon Reis</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Mike Mellor	✓	At-Large	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Anne Gossen	✓	At-Large	Jennifer Turner	✓	Staff
Sue Stafford	A	TC3			
Christy Agnese	✓	At-Large			

10 **Also in attendance:** Nancy Grossman, Discovery Trail; Ronda Roaring

11
 12 **Meeting Agenda**

- 13 Remembering Stuart Stein
 14 June Meeting Minutes
 15 Privilege of the Floor
 16 Chairs Report
 17 Staff Report
 18 Discovery Trail – Nancy Grossman
 19 CVB Monthly Report
 20 STPB Budget Committee
 21 Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail
 22 Comments on recently attended funded events
 23

24 **The meeting was called to order at 3:06 PM.**

25
 26 **Remembering Stuart Stein** – Members of the STPB went around the room offer remembrances of Stuart
 27 Stein. Some of the words used to describe Stuart were inspiring, consensus builder, integrity, generosity,
 28 warmth, wisdom and humor. Members expressed their gratitude on having him on the Strategic Tourism
 29 Planning Board as a friend and visionary.
 30

31 **June 2014 STPB meeting minutes** were approved with no changes.

32
 33 **Privilege of the Floor** – Ronda Roaring suggested that the STPB focus on eco-tourism in order to draw
 34 visitors from outside the county. She noted a damsel and dragonfly meeting that she attended in
 35 Binghamton that had a turnout of 60 including a few visitors who traveled from outside the country. There is
 36 a book launch that will take place between 3:00-4:00 July 23rd.
 37

38 **Chair's Report** - Rick Adie reported that a special ACOD committee will meet on August 6th to review the
 39 ACOD program. In addition Christy Agnese will begin interviews in August to extract lessons learned for the
 40 STPB from the failure of the Finger Lakes Wine Center. Susie Monagan will fill the IC seat in 2015; One
 41 new Arts & Culture representative and one new Lodging representative will be sought for 2015. There will

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Meeting Minutes Draft – July 2014**

42 be no STPB meeting in the month of August; the next meeting will take place in September at the Cayuga
43 Nature Center.

44
45 **STPB Budget Committee** – Rick Adie, Tom Knipe and Sue Perlgut met with the Economic Development
46 Committee of the Legislature (EDC) to review the budget recommendations. He noted a comment that a
47 legislator made in disappointment with ACOD being subject to the 3.5% reduction. Tom Knipe stated that
48 allocated but unspent funds from 2014 can be rolled forward to allow the ACOD program to meet all of the
49 contracted commitments in 2015, even with the 3.5% allocation reduction. Also at the EDC meeting, Martha
50 Robertson asked why the Convention & Visitors Bureau budget did not show the program details. Details
51 were in the budget request and will be provided in the budget recommendation document before EDC is
52 asked to vote on the budget. The recommended budget will be presented to the EDC on August 18th. A
53 motion was made by Sue Perlgut to recommend the 2015 Tourism Program budget for adoption by the
54 Legislature, seconded by Christy Agnese. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

55
56 **Discovery Trail** – Nancy Grossman reported on the Discovery Trail mobile responsive update to their
57 website that will allow users to better access the website from their cellphones. Pull down menus,
58 directions, visitor surveys and links to visitithaca.com were among the updated features. The next step in
59 updating the website is optimization, which will involve having keywords updated and profile pages
60 recognized by Google Algorithms. The Discovery Trail has been working on a project with WBNG-TV out of
61 Binghamton. Nancy noted her interview with Action News and an upcoming commercial that will feature all
62 eight locations. The attendance of Discovery Trail sites increased in 2013 over the 2012 attendance figures.
63 Although the attendance growth for 2012-2013 was above target, the attendance for 2014 in the first two
64 quarters was flat. Upcoming projects will include collaborations with the affiliated organizations and an
65 exhibit for the 20th anniversary of the Discovery Trail.

66
67 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe reported that the fall grant round will be announced in the near future. An
68 application deadline is set for September 19th for Community Celebrations, Tourism Marketing and
69 Advertising and New Tourism Initiatives. A grant workshop will take place on August 19th at 4pm at the
70 Chamber of Commerce. Members were encouraged to attend and to send Tom contacts and ideas of new
71 projects or events taking place from December of this year through mid-2015. Grant review committees are
72 scheduled to convene in the 2nd week in October. The online grant application platform will be used for all
73 applications except Community Celebrations which will be included after the conversion to the new
74 platform, Apricot. A spring round of grant applications is anticipated in February. Tom noted his
75 participation in a newly formed bike share workgroup which is planning a study tour to Buffalo in the fall to
76 learn more about a bikeshare 4.0 model of bike sharing which may be suitable for Ithaca. The Tourism
77 Partner Award Program is now recruiting new nominations for individuals whose efforts have created 400 or
78 more room nights.

79
80 **Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan** - Tom Knipe presented on the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan, which is
81 a joint project of Seneca, Cayuga and Tompkins Counties. This plan looks at the potential to expand access
82 to the Cayuga Lake for paddling. Alta Planning and Design was hired along with Rick Manning as
83 subcontractor. Implementation will include enhanced maps and signage to waterfront access points,
84 targeted site development and enhanced waterfront access. Standup paddle boarding has been reported
85 as the fastest growing outdoor recreational activity, with sea and recreational kayaking high on the list of
86 growing outdoor activities as well. Tom also noted local growth on paddling rental and tour businesses and
87 expanded use of storage racks at state parks as local evidence of expanding interest.

88
89 The water trail will be a set of established access points and itineraries in order to get to the water
90 comfortably and will promote Cayuga Lake as a destination for a variety of paddling experiences, from short
91 day-trips to extended multi-day outings traversing the length of the lake. The water trail will begin with 14
92 established launch sites. In addition, over 30 potential access points in private ownership hold potential to
93 be developed and promoted through a partner program. The first phase of implementation of the plan will
94 include marketing, signage, basic improvements, partner agreements and work with the Steering committee
95 to advance the project. The 2nd phase will include major physical improvements at key sites and expansion
96 of the partner program. Potential sites for extensive site improvements as part of Phase Two are Stewart
97 Park East and West and Cass Park. The next steps will include brand development (logo, signage design
98 and style guide), engagement with local municipalities, and putting together a major funding application with

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Meeting Minutes Draft – July 2014

99 the other two Counties for through the NYS Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program in
100 2015.

101
102 John Gutenberger asked about whether official designation is available for water trails. Tom reported that a
103 designation exists and that a National Park Service representative had been part of the team who consulted
104 on the plan. *National Water Trail designation is granted by the Secretary of the Interior on recommendation*
105 *of the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program*
106 <http://www.nps.gov/WaterTrails/Home/About>

107
108 **CVB Monthly Report** – Bruce Stoff reported that the STR numbers will not be available until Friday. He
109 asked members to give him feedback on what numbers are most relevant in his monthly report to the
110 STPB. Year to date foot traffic in the Visitors Centers is up 19% with 4,500 visits between both locations.
111 Visit Ithaca's total page views are up 27% over 2013. The China Ready workshop will take place in
112 Rochester, similar to the previous workshops it focuses on driving the 100 million Chinese tourists now able
113 to travel into New York. The CVB has completed the first phase of their internal evaluation with Cornell
114 Cooperative Extension and will be presenting initial findings to the P&E Committee on July 31. The travel
115 guide is running low and may need to be reprinted in August. 993 new Facebook followers and 5 local news
116 stories were noted successes from the Outside Best Town Contest. A digital advertising campaign has
117 used a dozen different banners to test for effectiveness. Thus far, the media campaign that started six
118 weeks ago has yielded 2.6 million impressions and total clicks of 4,699. Through the partnerships, a link on
119 the website will direct people to mid-week deals that are open to all hotels and BnB's to advertise their
120 special rates.

121
122 **Update on the Downtown Construction** - Gary Ferguson noted a special fundraiser that took place last
123 night for the displaced employees of Simeon's and surrounding affected businesses. Currently the efforts of
124 the construction are focused on stabilizing the building in order to open the road for traffic. Today or
125 tomorrow two lanes of traffic will be opened on Aurora Street. Focuses on rebuilding the structure are
126 commons goals with hopes to have the work done by the end of the year. The Commons construction has
127 been disrupted due to the relocation of crews. It is undetermined as to how that will affect the scheduled
128 construction overall. As far as tourism is concerned, it was noted that over the last couple of months,
129 visitors have been driving downtown business more than the locals have.

130
131 Mayor Myrick has appointed a group at City Hall to address the safety issues. Some of the long term ideas
132 mentioned were re-routing truck routes while short term ways to make that route as safe as possible are
133 also being pursued. Rick Adie reported that the Marriott Hotel has plans of starting construction in August
134 with the expected completion of December 2015.

135
136 **Comments on Recently Attended Events** – Mike Mellor reported that although the Shakespeare play's
137 attendance was affected by weather, it was a fabulous event. Ronda Roaring noted that the Dragon Boat
138 Festival had a company Photograpy4D that took beautiful aerial pictures. Tom Knipe encouraged members
139 to check out the calendar on the STPB page for upcoming events: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/board
140 He listed the eight funded events coming up between now and the next meeting scheduled on September
141 17th. Sue Perlmut mentioned that the Ithaca Artist Market that will take place on Friday the 25th from 2-8 pm.

142
143 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:53pm.

144
145 Respectfully Submitted,
146 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant
147 Tompkins County Planning Department

148
149 **Next Meeting Scheduled**
150 Wednesday, Sept 17, 2014