

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

1 **Date:** February 19, 2014  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm  
 3 **Location:** Chamber of Commerce  
 4  
 5

**Attendees:**

Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	A	At-Large
Anthony Hopson	A	Ithaca College
Ian Golden	✓	Recreation
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture
John Gutenberger	A	Cornell
Lynnette Scofield	E	Lodging
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture
Miriam Musco	Res.	At-Large
Stephen Nunley	A	At-Large
Steve Hugo	✓	At-Large
Ken Jupiter	E	At-Large
Mike Mellor	✓	At-Large
Anne Gossen	✓	At-Large
Sue Stafford	✓	TC3
Christy Agnese	✓	At-Large

Name	✓	Representation
Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Susie Monagan	✓	Arts-Culture
John Spence	✓	CAP, Non-Voting
Bruce Stoff	✓	CVB, Non-Voting
Dwight Mengel	✓	Transportation, Non-Voting
Gary Ferguson	✓	DIA, Non-Voting
Jean McPheeters	E	Chamber, Non-Voting
Martha Armstrong	✓	TCAD, Non-Voting
Will Burbank	✓	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Beverly Baker	A	Associate Member
Carol Kammen	A	Associate Member
Jon Reis	A	Associate Member
Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Jennifer Turner	✓	Staff

**Agenda**

- 10 January Meeting Minutes
- 11 Chair's Report
- 12 Staff Report
- 13 Membership & Bylaws Committee
- 14 Action – Vote to recommend new STPB Member
- 15 Board and Staff Roles – **Rick Adie, Sue Perlgut, Tom Knipe, Ethan Ash**
- 16 Presentations and discussion
- 17 CVB 2014 Revised Work Plan
- 18 Presentation and Discussion
- 19 Planning and Evaluation Committee Report – **Ken Jupiter**

20 **The meeting was called to order** at 3:00 PM.

21 **January 2014 STPB meeting minutes** were approved with no changes

22 **Chair's Report:** Rick Adie opened his report by mentioning the Coltivare ribbon cutting which is seen as a great step forward for downtown Ithaca and TC3 in addition to culinary education. Last year was the first meeting and Coltivare has already secured funding of \$4.5 million. He mentioned that a new standing Agenda item will be a Staff Report. This is in response to a meeting Rick and Sue had Tom Knipe and Ed Marx in which they discussed Tom's work plan and his role in the Tourism Program.

23 **Staff Report:** Tom used his report to discuss his draft 2014 Work Plan, which was in the agenda packet. He mentioned that in addition to his 35 hours per week on the Tourism Program, he is currently working an additional 5 hours per week on the 10 year update of the County Comprehensive Plan with the Planning Department. He grouped his tourism-related work plan activities into five categories:

- 24 1. General administration (contracting, budgeting, finance, program evaluation, legislative process, oversight of contracted programs)
- 25 2. Staff support to the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (meetings, standing committees, working groups, activities, minutes)
- 26 3. Program management for four funded grant programs and Tourism Partner Awards.

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

- 41 4. Project support to a variety of tourism projects led by others, such as the Tompkins County  
42 Beautification Plan, Tompkins County Wayfinding Plan, Festivals Strategic Plan update, etc  
43 5. Lead implementation of specific elements of the Strategic Tourism Plan (those where TCPD –  
44 Tompkins County Planning Department – is the lead organization in the Plan). In 2014, those  
45 include the County Priority Trails Strategy, Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan and Finger Lakes Wine  
46 Center evaluation.  
47

48 **Board and Staff Roles** – Rick Adie, Sue Perlgut, Tom Knipe, and Ethan Ash went over the mission of the  
49 STPB to clarify the purpose. Tom Knipe led a discussion about ground rules for engaging in discussion, and  
50 the board agreed on the ground rules. Rick Adie presented his findings from his discussions with board  
51 members, County staff and members of the Legislature about the role and work of the STPB.  
52

### Who we are as a Board

- 54 • We are the designee of the County for tourism with expectations of implementing the strategic  
55 tourism plan as well as finding new opportunities for economic development through tourism.  
56 • Should establish linkages for monitoring, encouraging and supporting tourism efforts.  
57 • Look for opportunities to harness the energy of diverse groups (recreation, cultural, lodging)  
58

### Board Engagement

- 60 • How to make a difference (besides voting on grants).  
61 • Bringing the strategic plan to life (stay on path).  
62 • Shared Action Plan/Committee Action Plan (designate duties, opportunities for board engagement)  
63 • Gap analysis (distinguish lagging items a board member may be able to pick up)  
64 • Accountability for contracted organizations (metrics, reporting and shared agreements and  
65 expectations).  
66 • Expectations of Board Members (part of 2 page handout – included in these minutes)  
67

### How we need to improve

- 69 • Joint learning- speakers from the community and experts in content areas.  
70 • Committee of the whole- expansive discussions on tourism and opportunities for ad-hoc groups to  
71 come and check in and seek input. We would like to make board meetings more participatory. Will  
72 determine if some items can come as a consent agenda to make more time available.  
73 • Board members need to take a step back and look at issues - discuss and question.  
74 • Bring people charged with implementing the Strategic Plan for working input sessions.

### Three 2014 priorities advanced from P&E (ad-hoc groups):

- 76 1. Higher Education and Tourism Working Group  
77 2. Ag and Culinary Tourism Working Group ( Rita Rosenberg Barber and Ethan Ash have agreed to co-  
78 chair)  
79 3. Heritage and Cultural Tourism Working Group ( Stu Stein has agreed to chair)  
80 • Planning and Evaluation Committee- definition  
81 ○ The P&E Committee is tasked with developing and updating the TC Strategic Tourism Plan  
82 and monitoring, encouraging and supporting its implementation. Also program evaluation.  
83 • Opportunities for Board to have deep engagement.  
84 • Expand committee makeup with expert community members.  
85 • First step with these groups will be an “ideation” brainstorming about what the possibilities are. We  
86 will seek small, early victories.  
87 • Working sessions on the three priorities will come to full STPB as the year goes on.

### Attending Events

- 89 • Signup sheet of events in the next month (will add time at each board meeting for informal feedback)  
90 • Expand our presence/visibility as an STPB board.  
91 • Evaluation - both anecdotal and formal ( P&E).  
92 • Accountability - has the money been well spent?

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

93 Other specific opportunities for board engagement

- 94       • We have a mission but need to define the vision.  
95       • White papers on the failure of Wine Center and Ticket Center  
96       • Chmura Study- time for an update. Need to determine if it met our needs, was the methodology  
97       proper, what has changed in 5 years.  
98       • Branding and communications strategy for the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

99 **CVB Revised Work Plan** – Bruce Stoff opened his report with news that the CVB finished the year under  
100 budget at \$52,000. He announced that the CVB is working to finish 2014 within 3% of the plan. The 2013  
101 surplus is proposed to be rolled over be invested in rebuilding visitithaca.com, in hopes of boosting group  
102 sales and increasing outreach of visitor services. He noted the major changes of the 106 room Fairfield Inn,  
103 the flag change at the Trip Hotel and the renovation of the of the downtown Hotel Ithaca. There are three  
104 other hotel projects in the works. Winter Recess was mentioned as being too time consuming; the CVB does  
105 not plan to continue direct ownership and implementation of the program. Although there have been  
106 additions to the hotels in Ithaca, there is rising concern for the lack of conference space and the aging hotel  
107 infrastructure. Hotel occupancy rates are down 1.3%. He mentioned that supply grew at twice the rate of  
108 demand. Midweek occupancy rates went down from 54% to 53%. Mid-week business will be a major priority  
109 this year; plans for ad-campaigns are in the works. The question was presented to the STPB on how can we  
110 encourage construction of the type of property that will bring the mid-week room nights? Bruce also  
111 discussed the impact of the growth in use of AirBnB.

112  
113 Web traffic visits were up 25% this year; this was due to Google search optimization and Google Ad-words. I  
114 Love NY ran a subway campaign that also proved to add to the success. He mentioned the Facebook page  
115 achieved 14,500 likes in comparison to Syracuse with 12,000. Visitors Services is struggling with finding  
116 innovative ways to increase traffic; smartphones are proving to be a big competitor. The goal of increasing  
117 Visitors Center traffic by 8% was not successful. Overall the grade for goal achievements was 66%. Bruce  
118 mentioned that motorbus themed tours will be another focus for tourism this year (see CVB presentation on  
119 the STPB website).

120  
121 **Planning and Evaluation Committee Report** – Ken Jupiter reported that the \$147,000 set aside in 2013 is  
122 being put to use to fund the Wayfinding Plan, Ithaca Fork project and the informational kiosks on the new  
123 Commons. The three priorities for 2014 for board action are Ag and Culinary Tourism, Heritage Tourism and  
124 Higher Education Tourism and have been moved forward to the board to take action. Ken discussed making  
125 evaluation a part of the culture of the board and all of the partner organizations as well. P&E agreed on  
126 approach encompassing three levels: 1) establishment of basic indicators and reporting expectations for  
127 each funded program in consultation with the Tourism Coordinator, 2) development of in-depth evaluation  
128 plan for the CVB using the Systems Evaluation Protocol approach and 3) development of a Pathway Model  
129 for the Tompkins County Tourism Program which will serve as a visual model of the Strategic Tourism Plan.  
130 Combined these efforts will show how the all the moving parts fit together and work. Monica Hargraves, of  
131 the Cornell Office of Research on Evaluation has assisted P&E in developing these plans and we hope to  
132 recruit Monica to assist us further with this through a partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension.

133  
134 **Vote to recommend new STPB Member** – The Membership and Bylaws Committee brought forward the  
135 recommendation to appoint Andrew Zepp of the Finger Lakes Land Trust to fill the position recently vacated  
136 by Miriam Musco. The recommendation was approved unanimously and will be forwarded to the EDC.

137  
138 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe mentioned the tourism grant applications deadline as reminder to members. He  
139 suggested that the new online application that is now in place may help guide good decision making.

140  
141 **Next Meeting Scheduled**  
142 Wednesday, March 19, 2014

# Tompkins County STPB Roles and Responsibilities

## STPB Mission

*The Strategic Tourism Planning Board is charged by the Tompkins County Legislature with providing oversight and strategic direction for tourism initiatives that promote economic development and enhance the quality of life in Tompkins County.*

## Board member questions

- What can our board do?
- What is the Tourism Coordinator role?
- What is the CVB role and the role of other contracted programs?
- How do we collectively stay focused on the Strategic Tourism Plan?
- Where do I fit as an STPB member? What can I contribute?
- What can I do? What can't I do?

## A range of opportunities for STPB member engagement

			
<p><b>Big Projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair a Tourism Working Group</li> <li>• Lead board engagement on a policy issue</li> <li>• Become an STPB Officer</li> </ul>	<p><b>Small Projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research a topic and write it up</li> <li>• Lead a board development initiative</li> <li>• Assume leadership role in advancing an unassigned action</li> <li>• Perform Committee work</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ongoing Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve on an STPB Committee</li> <li>• Attend a funded event/project</li> <li>• Act as an STPB liaison to affiliated groups and projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Minimum Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend monthly meetings</li> <li>• Read agenda materials</li> <li>• Sector representation</li> <li>• Participate actively in discussions</li> <li>• Ask questions</li> </ul>

## STPB Purpose (From Bylaws)

1. To advise the appropriate committee of the Tompkins County Legislature, as well as the full Tompkins County Legislature, on all aspects of tourism development in Tompkins County.
2. To review and evaluate the activities of all entities receiving funds from the Tompkins County Room Occupancy Tax and to make recommendations to the entities receiving those funds as well as the Tompkins County Legislature in respect to their most appropriate and effective use. This includes the oversight of Tourism Grant Programs in place to assist events and programs of interest to local residents in attracting a broader audience from outside the County.
3. To develop, with input, a tourism policy for review and adoption by the Tompkins County Legislature which shall address all issues raised by reports and information pertinent to all aspects of tourism development.
4. To advise the Tompkins County Legislature, pursuant to the above clauses, on the allocation of proceeds from the Tompkins County Room Occupancy Tax.