

## Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Meeting Minutes – March 2012

**Date:** March 21, 2012  
**Time:** 3:00-5:00pm  
**Location:** Convention and Visitor's Bureau

### Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	Exc	At-Large	Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Anthony Hopson	✓	Ithaca College, Vice-Chair	Sue Stafford	✓	TC3
Beverly Baker	✓	At-Large	Susie Monagan	✓	Arts-Culture
David Sparrow	✓	At-Large, Chair	Tim Joseph	✓	At-Large
Ethan Ash		Arts-Culture	Brett Bossard	✓	CAP, Non-Voting
Gary Stewart		Cornell	Fred Bonn	✓	CVB, Non-Voting
Jon Reis	✓	Arts-Culture	Gary Ferguson	✓	DIA, Non-Voting
Ken Jupiter	✓	At-Large	Jean McPheeters	✓	Chamber, Non-Voting
Paul Tatar	Exc	Recreation	Martha Armstrong		TCAD, Non-Voting
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging	Will Burbank		Legislature, Non-Voting
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture	VACANT		Transportation, Non-Voting
Scott Wiggins	✓	Lodging	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Stuart Stein	Exc	At-Large	Pat Pryor	✓	Legislature, Alternate

**Also in attendance:** Pat Pryor (County Legislator, alternate for Will Burbank), Kathy Wilsea (Tompkins County Planning Dept.)

### Agenda

1. Approval of minutes for February, 2012 STPB meeting
2. Chair's report
3. Bylaws Vote – Beverly Baker
4. 2013 Tourism Program budget timeline
5. Spring 2012 Tourism Grant Recommendations
6. February CVB Report
7. The Ticket Center
8. Strategic Tourism Plan survey tutorial

### Discussion

**Approval of minutes for February 2012 meeting** – The draft minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote without change.

**Chair's report** -- David Sparrow announced the recommended ACOD and Capital Project grants were approved by PDEQ and the County Legislature. Bylaws vote was postponed until the required 2/3 of voting members are present.

**Budget Timeline** – Rick Adie provided a handout of the proposed schedule, which includes presentation to PDEQ in July. Rick pointed out the upcoming renovations of the Holiday Inn will have a big impact on room tax income projections, but Fairfield Inn will be opening during that time period. David announced that Todd Miner has resigned from STPB and asked anyone willing to replace Todd on the Budget Committee to please let him know.

**Spring 2012 Tourism Grant Recommendations** – Tom Knipe provided background information, which included details of outreach and information on changes to the application. The switch to a stated preference for electronic submission was successful, with 59 out of 62 applications being submitted electronically. Tom worked with many applicants to fine-tune their submissions. He provided a five-year history for committees to refer to. The overall number of applications increased 55%, which made for harder decisions. Community Celebrations is the only group that left some money for a fall round. Some members pointed out they would have to abstain due to affiliation with sponsoring organizations.

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New Tourism Initiative Grants – Jon Reis noted they could not fund all requests and, through use of a scoring rubric, recommend partial or full funding for 10 of the 12 applications. He reviewed the projects and answered members' questions. Jon would like to incorporate some kind of stewardship for new applicants to see if they need help making their event a success. Sue Perlgut suggested requesting an interim report every 90 days. Voice vote on slate: yes 10, no 0, abstentions 2 (Hopson and Wiggins).

**Bylaws** -- With 2/3 of voting members present at this time, Bylaws were addressed. Beverly Baker moved to accept the changes that were distributed to members prior to the meeting, which incorporate discussion from the February meeting. Voice vote: passed unanimously, and will proceed to PDEQ and the County Legislature.

**Return to Spring Grant Recommendations – Tourism Project Grants** – Jon Reis said this group also requested far more than STPB had in the budget. Because of the number of members who would need to abstain, project grant recommendations were addressed individually:

- Cayuga Nature Center, Great Hall Exhibition, phase II: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- Downtown Ithaca Alliance, Winter Festival: yes 11, no 0, abstention 1 (Hopson)
- Ithaca Children's Garden Bulb Labyrinth (Jon pointed out this is a project that could be constructed in phases with multiple years of partial funding): yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- Ithaca Shakespeare Co Summer Season: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- PRI Did Dinosaurs Poop?: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- Social Ventures, Int'l Dragon Boat Festival (now two days): yes 10, no 0, abstentions 2 (Perlgut, Joseph)
- History Center Birth of Moog Synthesizer: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- History Center Scottish Games & Celtic Festival (different weekend from Dragon Boat Festival): yes 12, no 0, abstention 0
- T C Public Library Foundation: IthaCasts Greek and Roman Plaster Casts: yes 12, no 0, abstention 0 [note this item was for zero funding]
- T C Public Library Foundation: 2013 The Hip Hop Experience: yes 10, no 1 (Sparrow), abstention 1 (Monaghan)

Marketing and Advertising Grants – Ken Jupiter said this budget was closer to the amount of the requests, in part because there is a limit of \$5,000. Many of the applicants have received M&A grants in prior rounds, and some are also currently applying for Project Grants. Four of the 16 applications were for web upgrades. All applicants need to coordinate with CVB, which will produce a set of guidelines for web upgrades that recipients will be required to follow; also those marketing anything to do with wine will be asked to coordinate with the Finger Lakes Wine Center. Voice vote on slate: yes 11, no 0, abstention 1 (Hopson). [Voting member Scott Wiggins left at this time.]

Community Celebrations Grants – Tom Knipe reported for the committee, noting there were many more applications than before, and some were new applicants. Although many were for "classic" events, others for were projects that expand the traditional definition of a Community Celebration. This will be discussed further in April to better define the types of events that are eligible. Applicants no longer are required to provide a letter of support from the municipality, but must give them a copy of their plans. Vote on slate: yes 11, no 0, abstention 0.

**February CVB Report** – Fred Bonn provided some material with the agenda. He reviewed the successful Winter Recess event, noting 74% of participants indicated they intend to return. Events are needed mid-week and during the second weekend to draw more room nights. NYS matching funds have been received. The new Travel Guide is out. Fred reported one page of advertising was inadvertently dropped, and he is working on how to trade off that loss with other products for advertisers. The Guide designers are helping with the cost of those trades. The Ithaca College pool is scheduling more regional events. Susie Munoz has left the CVB and the job description will be rewritten and advertised. In terms of numbers for February, room occupancy was up 12% over February 2011, average daily rate up 6%, and overall revenue up 18.7%. Jean McPheeters announced Tim Tebow has signed with the NY Jets, which would be big for Cortland and Tompkins counties by bringing media attention and room nights.

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**The Ticket Center** – Brett Bossard announced that the Ticket Center was close to finalizing a new partnership with the State Theatre. The State has been separate from the Ticket Center for six years, and the new arrangement will consolidate online ticket sales with one company and allow State Theatre tickets to be sold through the Ticket Center. The State will retain its own box office, but will now have expanded box office capabilities through The Ticket Center. The Ticket Center has been subsidized by the Tourism Program and by CAP for much of its existence; this new partnership will greatly expand its gross volume of ticket sales which should allow the Ticket Center to become self-sustaining within the next several years.

**Strategic Tourism Plan survey tutorial** – The survey will close Monday evening 3/26. P&E will meet during the first week of April to analyze survey results and develop preliminary goal and action priorities for the plan. Discussion at STPB on 4/18 will center on finalizing draft priorities. Tom showed how to proceed through the survey and encouraged members to share the link to the survey. Over 60 responses had been received to date.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary  
Tompkins County Planning Dept.

### **Next Meetings Scheduled**

Wednesday, April 18 – 3pm

Wednesday, May 16 – 3pm