

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Meeting Minutes – November 2011

Date: November 30, 2011
Time: 3:00-5:00pm
Location: Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Attendees:

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

Also in attendance: Jordan Lalley (TC3 student), Kathy Wilsea (Tompkins County Planning Dept.)

Agenda

- Chair's Report
- Tourism Partner Award
- Fall 2011 Tourism Grant Recommendations
- Nominating Committee Report
- Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan Update
- Gas Drilling SGEIS Comment Letter from STPB
- Finger Lakes Wine Center Q&A
- CVB 2012 Marketing and Advertising Strategy

Discussion

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 by David Sparrow, Chair.

1. **Chair's Report** – No report.
2. **Tourism Partner Award** – Rick Adie had provided information with the agenda. Alpha Phi Alpha received this award three years ago from the County Legislature. Three recommendations were discussed since then at STPB, but not sent to the Legislature. The award includes a paving stone on the Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail near the Chamber of Commerce, and recognition in the press. There is currently no budget for the program; the committee intends to recommend a budget in the spring. In the meantime, awards can still be conferred by the County Legislature. The committee decided to nominate two new efforts and revisit some of the previous recommendations. The two new projects are National Collegiate Undergraduate Research (NCUR) and TurkeyShoot Lacrosse Tournament. The committee recommends giving the award to both nominees. With Susie Monagan abstaining, the recommendation received unanimous voice vote by other members. It will be forwarded to the County Legislature.
3. **Fall 2011 Tourism Grant Recommendations**
Tourism Project – Jon Reis reviewed the committee's recommendations, which passed by unanimous voice vote.

At this point, David asked Sue Stafford to introduce our guest. She welcomed Jordan Lalley, who is completing a Hospitality internship at TC3.

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Meeting Minutes – November 2011

Tourism Marketing & Advertising – Ken Jupiter reviewed the committee recommendations. He noted the reductions in recommended award amounts are based on disallowed portions of requests. There was discussion at the committee about grant funds being available only to match spending on out-of-county marketing (not local marketing) and making parameters clear to applicants. The committee's recommendations passed by unanimous voice vote.

Community Celebrations – Will be addressed later in the meeting due to Carol Kammen's anticipated late arrival.

Feedback on grant management – Tom Knipe asks that members step back and look at the overall grant process. Are there ways to improve service and accountability? Tom has several proposed goals. He will send a request for input to members in the next few days and incorporate responses into recommendations that he will bring at an upcoming STPB meeting. Gary Stewart asked for Tom's comments on how the job is going. Tom said he is lucky, as smart, engaged and talented people are working on tourism. Tweaks are being done to accounting, grant tracking, budgeting and other administrative processes. He looks forward to completing the strategic tourism plan and working on implementation. He is excited to work more on product development and new initiatives. He wants to solidify reporting and evaluations for the grant process. A reporting format exists, and he has been following up to try to receive the reports, but more can be done to clarify project goals, performance-based outcomes and ROI. There was agreement that we need to start informing grant recipients that they will not get future funding if their reports are not returned complete and on time.

4. Nominating Committee Report Recommendations – Beverly Baker reported that the Nominating Committee discussed STPB Term Limits, a topic that has been discussed numerous times in the past. The committee will bring formal recommendations to STPB at a future meeting. Officers will be elected at the January STPB meeting. Currently David Sparrow is a nominee for Chair and Anthony Hopson is a nominee for Vice Chair. The committee invites current members to contact Beverly if they are willing/interested to serve next year or at a future date. Tom Knipe organized a draft description of officer duties, and that was distributed. Tom and Sue Perlgut are developing committee descriptions and updating the training and intake process for new STPB members. Carol Chock asked if STPB had ever considered having associate members. She feels this would allow opportunities on STPB for members to cycle on/off and meet term limits. Scott Wiggins said we have some non-STPB members serving on committee, but it is informal.

5. Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan Update – Tom Knipe reported he met with the Planning and Evaluation Committee to plan a workshop. Date is Tuesday 1/10/2012, time is 4 to 6 PM, location not determined yet. They will be seeking input on outreach and format for the workshop.

6. Gas Drilling SGEIS Comment Letter from STPB – David asked for comments on a letter that Tom had drafted with input from David and Fred Bonn. Anne Kellerman thought the letter was well written, and mentions our concerns as seen through our "lens". Carol Chock said it is excellent that the letter is specific, and not an "I like it" or "I don't like it" statement. Scott Wiggins moved to submit the comments as drafted, which passed by unanimous voice vote. Carol Chock provided a flyer on how to submit comments, and asked that the STPB final comments be shared with the Clerk of the County Legislature and Tompkins County Council of Governments. She stated the Legislature's PDEQ committee just held a special meeting and passed three resolutions on gas drilling. Those resolutions will go to the full Legislature's next meeting. TCCOG is sponsoring a public hearing 12/1 at the State Theatre from 7 to 11 PM. STPB members agreed by consensus to also submit the comments at the TCCOG meeting. *Tom Knipe attended and submitted STPB's comments.*

7. Finger Lakes Wine Center Q&A – Fred Bonn said STPB is extremely proud of this project, which opened on 10/31/10. Although that was a "lousy" date, according to Fred, it met the complicated licensing requirements, sunset date of the State's special legislation, and Certificate of Occupancy exemption. He said their cash flow is still challenged, and the board of directors realized they needed to make changes. At the recommendation of Gary Ferguson, they opened up to ideas and recommendations of outside experts by expanding the board, and took the recommendations to heart and are now implementing them. Their most difficult decisions concerned the cost of staffing the center, and they did not keep the Director due to funding. Now some volunteers are bridging the gap. The board is renegotiating the lease and some

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Meeting Minutes – November 2011

contracts. They are still struggling, but seeing some new energy, and Fred expects efforts to be successful. In discussion period, he said the bigger board is expected to work better, and they needed the outside perspective and expect additional financial resources. The new wine and cheese CSA should be significant – they seek 80 subscriptions. Use of the space will become proactive and target selling wine by the bottle. A re-launch may be a component of the capital campaign. They are developing a strategy to get more participation from the wine industry in the region. The board realized the Center would not have developed without Sue Lonergan, and laying her off was absolutely their last choice. Signage will continue to improve, and hours have been expanded. Scott Wiggins asked how we can help individually, and Fred suggested making it part of the tour you give to friends and family. Changes have occurred in the space even since STPB met there in September. They are considering hosting a reception for managers, and having a New Year's Eve package with the Holiday Inn. Anne asked what produces income for the center, and Fred said they aim to sell more bottled wine and book the function space for parties. Rick suggested organizing 3-bottle gift sets that can be shipped.

8. CVB 2012 Marketing and Advertising Strategy – Fred Bonn said the Convention & Visitor Bureau work is customer-based, so they always want to know “How do we keep people visiting Ithaca?” Right now they want to market Ithaca as an antidote to all the anxieties of everyday life. There is much opportunity for expansion of mid-week business, especially when the Holiday Inn expansion for business conferences is complete. Fred reviewed their budget and weakening potential for state funds. A copy of the presentation will be provided to STPB members.

3. Fall 2011 Tourism Grant Recommendations (continued)

Community Celebrations Grants – Carol Kammen reviewed the six applications received by the committee. One was put off to the Spring round without prejudice. If the other five recommendations are funded, it will bring the number of grants this year to 21, with 8 in the City and Town of Ithaca. Although the Ulysses Library already held their anniversary celebration, the recommended grant is to publish a history of the library. The Asian Festival had an incomplete application, and Tom Knipe will work with them on grant writing and budget clarification to try to improve future applications. The board voted unanimously to support the committee recommendations.

Arts & Culture Development – David asked Brett Bossard for a report. Brett said they received no new applications; all grantees are now continuing on multi-year grants. He expects annual reports soon from all the current recipients.

9. Announcements – Todd Miner announced Cornell Outdoor Education's annual Outdoor Gear Sale will take place Saturday, 12/3 from 9 to noon. Brett announced the annual Holiday Art Market will take place 12/10 at the Women's Community Building.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:59pm.

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

Next Meetings Scheduled

January 18, 2012