

## Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Final Meeting Minutes

1 **Date:** January 19, 2022  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm  
 3 **Location:** Virtual Meeting – Zoom Video Conference

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5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	Marian Levy Wilson	E	At-Large
Laura Winter Falk	P	At-Large	<i>Megan Barber</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture	Peggy Coleman	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Alexis Zaharis Grimm	P	Lodging	<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large	<i>Henry Granison</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Vacant		At-Large	<i>Heather McDaniel</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>IEAD, Non-Voting</i>
Wendy Kobler	P	Ithaca College	<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Patty Poist</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Carol Kammen</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Rick Manning	P	At-Large	<i>Michael Miller</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	<i>Jon Reis</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Todd Parlato	E	At-Large	<i>Chuck Tauck</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture	Nick Helmholdt	<i>P</i>	Tourism Program Director
Deb Mohlenhoff	P	TC3	Kristin McCarthy	P	TCDPS

6 **Guests:** Kurt Anderson, Arthur Keith, Deirdre Kurzweil

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8 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Chair Kelli Cartmill called meeting to order at 3:02pm. No  
 9 changes to the agenda.

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11 **Action: Approval of November 2021 STPB Meeting Minutes** – The draft November minutes were approved  
 12 as submitted (motion by Doug Levine, seconded by Greg Mezey). Motion carried.

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14 **Privilege of the Floor** – Ken Jupiter and the rest of the board thanked Kelli Cartmill for her dedication and  
 15 leadership as STPB chair over the past several years.

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17 **Action: Election of 2022 STPB Officers**

18 To comply with STPB bylaws, which stipulate that board officers be elected at the organizational meeting of  
 19 the year, the members re-voted to elect the 2022 chair and vice chair.

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21 **Action:** Monika Roth made a motion, which Kelly Makosch seconded, to appoint Brett Bossard as 2022  
 22 chair and Doug as 2022 vice chair of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board. Motion carried by members  
 23 present, with Doug Levine and Brett Bossard abstaining.

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25 **Chair's Report – Brett Bossard**

26 Brett expressed his appreciation to Kelli for her leadership as chair, especially during the pandemic, and his  
 27 enthusiasm for collaborating with STPB colleagues in the coming year. He shared that he, Nick, Kelli, and  
 28 Doug have been in touch already to strategize on core initiatives for 2022, such as funding  
 29 recommendations and short term rental market monitoring and analysis, ensuring the board's efforts help  
 30 to boost tourism to our area while enhancing quality of life for the community.

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### **Staff Report & Q4 2021 Room Tax Report – Nick Helmholdt**

33 Nick also thanked Kelli for her dedication to the board over the years and leadership during COVID. He  
34 introduced Patty Poist, TCAT’s communications and marketing manager, who joins the STPB as its ex officio  
35 Transportation representative, and updated group on funding rounds for the Arts and Cultural  
36 Organizational Development and other grant programs. In addition, he shared that the 2022 STPB  
37 committee roster and member conflict of interest forms will go out via email in the next week and that the  
38 Tourism Program will report to the Legislature’s newly formed Planning, Development, and Environmental  
39 Quality (PDEQ) Committee starting in February. He next provided an overview of the fourth-quarter 2021  
40 room tax report, which significantly exceeded projections set in the budget as hotel room rates and  
41 occupancy approached pre-pandemic levels. He shared that a budget adjustment will be prepared to bring  
42 unspent funds from 2021 into 2022, tax-exempt sales are in line with historical averages, tax revenue from  
43 accommodations with 10 or fewer rooms continue to grow even after adjusting for the higher tax rate  
44 adopted last year, and various other indicators point to room tax collections returning to long-term trends.  
45 The Q&A discussion covered various topics, including late room tax payments, impact of Omicron on  
46 lodging industry, continued growth in short term rentals sector, ongoing hospitality workforce shortages,  
47 the budget reserve policy and 2022 budget planning, occupancy and average room rate data, and more.

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### **Member and Staff Introductions**

50 Returning members, new members, and Tourism Program staff shared a bit about their professional and  
51 personal backgrounds, connection to the Tompkins County community, areas of interest in tourism, and  
52 various fun tidbits and anecdotes. Topics ranged from freestyle skateboarding to roadside attraction  
53 cultural appreciation, a grandchild birth announcement, alpaca and poultry farming, ice wine making,  
54 cycling the Erie Canal, and more.

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### **CVB Q4 Report – Peggy Coleman**

57 Peggy shared highlights from the fourth quarter from the Convention and Visitors Bureau. These included  
58 updates on staff hiring; the 2022 travel guide; marketing and promotion for Ithaca Loves Teachers; the Visit  
59 Ithaca Waterfalls Challenge; social media/website traffic statistics and analytics, downtown conference  
60 center planning and development; motor coach tours and conference sales; an accessibility audit of  
61 Tompkins County attractions, restaurants, and lodging for I LOVE NY; as well as ongoing work on the  
62 Chamber and CVB’s strategic plan and upcoming move to Brindley Street in downtown Ithaca.

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### **Update: Downtown Community Conference Center – Jennifer Tavares**

65 Jennifer gave an abbreviated report on Gary’s behalf as he’d needed to depart for another meeting. Key  
66 points included that the conference center working group continues to make progress, with grant approval  
67 close to being finalized with Empire State Development, and the Downtown Ithaca Local Development  
68 Corporation is exploring electrification of the kitchen facilities, in alignment with goals of the City of Ithaca’s  
69 Green New Deal. In addition, Jennifer shared that demolition is finished and the conference center is  
70 anticipated to open in the fall of 2023.

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72 **Member Announcements** – Members shared news from the Finger Lakes Land Trust, Statler Hotel,  
73 Community Arts Partnership, and State Theatre.

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75 **Adjournment** – Chair Brett Bossard adjourned the meeting at 4:43pm.

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