

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

1 **Date:** July 20, 2022
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Zoom/TCAT Large Conference Room, 737 Willow Avenue, Ithaca, NY

4

5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	Teri Tarshus	P	At-Large
Kelli Cartmill	E	Lodging	Marian Levy Ware	P	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	E	At-Large	<i>Henry Granison</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Vacant	N/A	Ithaca College	<i>Heather McDaniel</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>IAED, Non-Voting</i>
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Patty Poist</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Rick Manning	A	At-Large	<i>Carol Kammen</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Greg Mezey	E	At-Large	<i>Michael Miller</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	<i>Jon Reis</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture	<i>Chuck Tauck</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Deb Mohlenhoff	E	TC3	<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture	Nick Helmholdt	<i>P</i>	Tourism Program Director
Jeremiah Swain	E	At-Large	Kristin McCarthy	P	County Staff

6 **Guests:** Rosemary Avila, Suzanne Smith Jablonski, Janine Willis

7

8 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda/Privilege of the Floor** – Chair Brett Bossard called the meeting
 9 to order at 3:07pm. No changes to the agenda. No one spoke during privilege of the floor.

10

11 **Action: Approval of June 2022 STPB Meeting Minutes** – The draft June 2022 minutes were approved as
 12 submitted (moved by Steven Stull, seconded by Monika Roth).

13

14 **Chair's Report** – *Brett Bossard*

15 No report but he shared his enthusiasm for hearing the upcoming presentations.

16

17 **Staff Report & Q2 Room Tax Report** – *Nick Helmholdt*

18 Fall 2022 tourism grant cycle is open. Deadline to apply is Sept. 12, and a virtual workshop is scheduled for
 19 Aug. 2. Wendy Kobler left Ithaca College, and search is underway for her replacement to STPB. Jeremiah
 20 and Teri have both joined committees and an updated list was included in the June agenda packet.
 21 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee reviewed existing diversity statement and create a board matrix.
 22 Quarter 2 room tax report came in higher than forecasted, with continued growth in smaller properties
 23 even after adjusting for increased tax rate. Room tax collection rates at area hotels are approaching 2019
 24 figures, and delinquent payments are declining thanks to outreach from county deputy attorney.

25

26 **Presentation: IDCC – Meet the Local Development Corporation** – *Suzanne Smith Jablonski*

27 Suzanne described her role as executive director of the Local Development Corporation (LDC) before briefly
 28 recapping the talk given by Tom Knipe to the board in June. She then gave a quick primer on LDCs in
 29 general and highlighted core duties assigned to her and her team, including oversight and administration of

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

30 grant funds and financing, serving as linkage between stakeholders (DIA, CVB, STPB, community members),
31 and tracking operations and development. Groups brainstormed on ways in which STPB could assist.

32

33 **Community Beautification Program** – *Janine Willis, Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County*
34 Janine provided an overview of the Community Beautification Program, which turned 20 this year. Her
35 presentation covered program background, components, post-COVID transition, and plans for future. She
36 shared details on plantings, maintenance schedule and other logistics, partnerships with city forester and
37 Downtown Ithaca Alliance among other stakeholders, as well as current challenges, such as road and
38 sidewalk construction projects, and limitations with irrigation system. Q&A discussion covered several
39 topics, including volunteer training and recruitment, upgrades to equipment such as van used by program
40 staff, seasonal preparations, rural grant programs, outreach to low- and middle-income residents, and
41 water usage.

42

43 **CVB: Mid-Year Report** – *Peggy Coleman*

44 Peggy shared highlights from the CVB's work during the first six months of 2022. Their summer team
45 members are onboard, with both visitor centers going full steam, and the marketing, public relations, and
46 sales teams continue to keep busy. Website traffic dipped recently, but their search optimization consultant
47 shared this trend is happening across the board in DMOs, most likely due to lifting of travel restrictions.
48 News was also shared regarding the 2022 Farm to Fork Agriculinary Microgrant Program, Waterfalls
49 Challenge, Retreat to Ithaca campaign, a Travel & Leisure magazine feature on the Finger Lakes region, as
50 well as other initiatives.

51

52 **2023 Tourism Promotion Agency Designation** – *Peggy Coleman*

53 Peggy presented a resolution requesting that the Tompkins County Legislature approve the Ithaca
54 Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau as the official Tourism Promotion Agency for Tompkins
55 County for 2023. She explained that the NYS Tourism Promotion Act requires the legislature of each county
56 to appoint such an agency as the applicant and recipient of state tourism matching funds.

57

58 **Action:** Steven Stull made a motion, which Laura Winter Falk seconded, to recommend the Tompkins
59 County Legislature approve the designation of the Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau
60 as the 2023 Tourism Promotion Agency for Tompkins County. Motion carried.

61

62 **Member Announcements**

63 Group shared upcoming events of interest: Ithaca Artist Market, Watermusic: Dancing on the Trail, Drive-In
64 Summer Concerts at Triphammer Arts, Grassroots, Movies in the Park (Stewart Park), CFCU Summer
65 Concert Series on the Commons, summer concerts at Taughannock State Park, and a 20th anniversary
66 celebration for Trumansburg Farmers Market. Members also reported that Reggae Fest was a hit, and both
67 the Green Street parking garage and Salmon Creek Bridge in the Town of Lansing are set to reopen soon.

68

69 **Adjournment** – Chair Brett Bossard adjourned the meeting at 4:29pm.