

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

1 **Date:** Oct. 19, 2022  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm  
 3 **Location:** Via Zoom

4  
 5 **Attendees:**

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

6 **Guests:** Kurt Anderson, Rosemary Avila, Jodi LaPierre, Richy Petrina, Suzanne Smith Jablonski

7  
 8 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda/Privilege of the Floor** – Chair Brett Bossard called the meeting  
 9 to order at 3:06pm. No changes to the agenda. No one spoke during privilege of the floor. Greg Mezey  
 10 introduced guest Richy Petrina.

11  
 12 **Action: Approval of Sept. 21, 2022 STPB Draft Minutes** – The draft September 2022 minutes were  
 13 approved as submitted (moved by Steven Stull, seconded by Kelly Makosch).

14  
 15 **Chair's Report** – *Brett Bossard*  
 16 Brett thanked everyone for their patience while he's been transitioning into his new position as executive  
 17 director of alumni and family engagement at Ithaca College.

18  
 19 **Staff Report & Q3 Room Tax Report** – *Nick Helmholdt*  
 20 Nick reported that the County Legislature's Expanded Budget Committee had declined to support a proposal  
 21 to pay his salary from the County's 10% share of room tax dollars. He also relayed that Henry Granison will  
 22 be stepping down from his seat on the Legislature for health reasons effective Oct. 31, David Harker was  
 23 officially appointed Ithaca College representative to the STPB by the Legislature, and a copy of a recent  
 24 presentation on short term rentals given by a Cornell graduate student was included in the agenda packet.  
 25 Nick reported that the amount of room tax collected in Q3 (\$1,539,072) was record-breaking for a single  
 26 quarter, surpassing the previous single quarter record from Q3 2021 by nearly \$400,000 and exceeding  
 27 projected revenues for all of 2022. Q&A discussion covered occupancy and average daily rates, growth  
 28 among lodging properties with 10 or fewer rooms, fewer tax-exempt bookings, surplus fund balance,  
 29 American Rescue Plan Act funds, adjusting for inflation, budget planning, market trends, and a decline in tax  
 30 delinquency thanks to persistent outreach by the deputy county attorney.

31  
 32

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

33 **Report: Visitor Journey A2D Training** – *Rosemary Avila, director, TC Workforce Development Board*  
34 Rosemary provided an overview of the Ithaca/Tompkins County - Visitor Journey A2D™ (Arrival to  
35 Departure) tourism training program. Free to participants, it offers a blend of online learning and in-person  
36 classes and is funded through the Workforce Development Board. Modules explore different facets of the  
37 local tourism industry and give participants the tools to provide positive visitor experiences. Rosemary  
38 invited interested board members to enroll in the program ([ithaca.visitorjourney.com](http://ithaca.visitorjourney.com)). Q&A discussion  
39 covered enrollment data, recent trends in hiring hospitality staff, target audience for enrollment,  
40 applicability for university staff, curriculum, and more.

41  
42 **Report: Community Celebrations Grant Review Committee – Nick Helmholdt**  
43 Nick reported on behalf of Carol Kammen, chair of the Community Celebrations Grant Review Committee  
44 and County Historian, who did not attend the review committee meeting due to illness. However, Carol was  
45 present for today's meeting and extended her thanks to fellow committee members and County staff for  
46 their support of the Community Celebrations program. Nick noted that fewer requests than typical had  
47 been received, though reasons for the smaller applicant pool remain unclear. Five applications were  
48 received, with four recommended for \$4,775 in grant awards and \$8,175 in unspent funds remaining.

49  
50 **Action:** David Harker made a motion, which Steven Stull seconded, to recommend the 2022 Fall  
51 Community Celebrations Grant awards be approved for funding. Motion carried. Doug Levine abstained.

52  
53 **Report: Combined Tourism Grant Review Committee – Kelly Makosch**  
54 Kelly Makosch, on behalf of the Combined Grant Review Committee, reported on the applications  
55 submitted in this round and thanked her fellow committee members and County staff for their support of  
56 the Tourism Marketing Grant and Tourism Project Grant programs. Of the six applications received, five  
57 were recommended for a total of \$26,300 in grant awards with \$4,800 in unspent funds remaining. Q&A  
58 discussion covered individual applications and rationale behind committee decision-making, eligibility  
59 requirements, grant cycle timing, and public outreach.

60  
61 **Action:** Kelly Makosch made a motion, seconded by Jeremiah Swain, to recommend the 2022 Fall Tourism  
62 Marketing Grant and Tourism Project Grant awards be approved for funding. Motion carried.

63  
64 **Report: Tourism Capital Grant Review Committee – Kurt Anderson**  
65 Kurt Anderson, administrator for the Tourism Capital Grant Review Committee, provided an overview of  
66 the applications submitted in this round and thanked his fellow committee members and County staff for  
67 their support. Requests for funding (\$426,651) exceeded the available budget (\$242,000) substantially,  
68 with eight proposals (five feasibility studies, three capital improvement studies) submitted and seven  
69 recommended, leaving \$0 in available funds. Q&A discussion covered review process, questions regarding  
70 returns on investment, an amendment to a Hangar Theatre contract, issues with specific applications,  
71 staffing, and more.

72  
73 **Action:** Josh Friedman made a motion, which Steven Stull seconded, to recommend the 2022 Tourism  
74 Capital Grant awards be approved for funding. Motion carried. Doug Levine abstained. [Rick Manning  
75 departed meeting prior to the vote.]

76  
77 **Report: Membership & Bylaws Committee – Doug Levine**  
78 Doug Levine, on behalf of the Membership & Nomination Committee, presented the slate of voting  
79 members up for renewal in 2023. He also reported that Barbara Romano was recommended for  
80 reappointment by Cornell. Her application was forwarded directly to the County Legislature for approval.

81

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

82 **Action:** Josh Friedman moved to recommend Brett Bossard (Arts-Culture), Alexis Zaharis Grimm (Lodging),  
83 Kelly Makosch (Recreation), Greg Mezey (At-Large), Steven Stull (Arts-Culture), Jeremiah Swain (At-Large),  
84 and Marian Levy Ware (At-Large) for reappointment to the STPB. David Harker seconded. Motion carried.

85

### **Member Announcements**

87 Members shared news related to Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Opera Ithaca Festival, Trumansburg  
88 Conservatory of Arts, new public access points on the Finger Lakes Trail, and construction of a mandala on  
89 the Ithaca College campus by monks from the Namgyal Monastery. Doug shared that Visit Ithaca helped  
90 sponsor the recent Paula Poundstone conference at the State Theatre, which attracted numerous  
91 attendees from outside Tompkins County. Application deadline for adult-use cannabis dispensary licenses  
92 in New York State closed in late September. November STPB meeting will be held at the Statler Hotel.

93

94 **Adjournment** – Chair Brett Bossard adjourned the meeting at 4:10pm.