

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

1 **Date:** Oct. 16, 2024  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm  
 3 **Location:** Old Jail, Scott Heyman Conference Room  
 4

5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Brett Bossard	E	Arts-Culture	Monika Roth	P	Agriculture
Laura Winter Falk	E	At-Large	Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture
Jeff Golden	P	Ithaca College	Teri Tarshus	P	At-Large
Alexis Zaharis Grimm	P	Lodging	<i>Megan Barber</i>	P	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large	Peggy Coleman	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Jenna Kain	A	Lodging	<i>Heather McDaniel</i>	E	<i>IAED, Non-Voting</i>
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Frank Doldo</i>	P	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Marian Levy Ware	P	At-Large	<i>Nan Rohrer</i>	E	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Mike Sigler</i>	P	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Rick Manning	P	At-Large	<i>Vacant</i>	P	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	<i>Michael Miller</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Bethany Parisi	E	Arts-Culture	<i>Chuck Tauck</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Scott Riesenberger	P	TC3	Nick Helmholdt	P	Tourism Program Director
Barbara Romano	E	Cornell University	Kristin McCarthy	P	County Staff

6 **Guests:** Marissa Nolan, Chris Stephany, Katherine Taylor  
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8 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda/Privilege of the Floor** – Vice Chair Doug Levine opened the  
 9 meeting at 3:05pm. No privilege of the floor. No changes to the agenda.  
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11 **Action: Approval of September 2024 STPB Draft Minutes** – The draft September 2024 minutes were  
 12 approved (moved by Monika Roth, seconded by Alexis Zaharis Grimm) as submitted. Motion carried.  
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14 **Vice Chair's Report** – *Doug Levine*  
 15 Doug did not have a report.  
 16

17 **Staff Report & Q3 2024 Room Tax Report** – *Nick Helmholdt*

18 The staff report highlighted key updates, including Jason Sidle's upcoming appointment, draft STPB bylaws,  
 19 and the ACOD grant cycle. The Q3 2024 room tax report showed \$1,516,136 in collections, slightly below  
 20 projections but covered by reserves, and data showed a countywide drop in Airbnb/VRBO nights available,  
 21 potentially due to Ithaca's short-term rental regulations. Other topics included the suspension of 2025  
 22 Tourism Capital grants, the Key Bank building repurposing, the ACOD Stabilization Recovery Fund  
 23 workshop, and Ithaca Area Economic Development's community survey. During Q&A, Alexis inquired about  
 24 Cornell University's unpaid room taxes for dorm rentals during reunion weekends. Nick responded that the  
 25 County Attorney's Office is disputing Cornell's exemption claim and is also handling another confidential  
 26 delinquent room tax case.  
 27

28 **Presentation: Community Beautification Program Update** – *Marissa Nolan, CCE Tompkins*

29 Marissa updated on the Community Beautification Program's successes, including thousands of plantings  
 30 and five rural grants. The program, relying on a dedicated team and volunteers, is updating its strategic  
 31 plan to align with CCE Tompkins' goals. Stakeholder interviews revealed key themes like community well-  
 32 being, rural outreach, and resource challenges. In response, the team outlined goals for climate resilience,

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33 educational signage, and workforce development. Q&A focused on plant donations, vehicle usage, rural  
34 grant impact, and potential collaborations with schools and community groups to amplify outreach.

35

### **Presentation: Community Arts Partnership Update** – *Megan Barber*

36 Megan presented an update on CAP's 2024 activities, providing an overview of their grant administration  
37 work. This includes the New York State Council on the Arts regrant program, the Strategic Opportunity  
38 Stipend, and Arts and Culture Organization Development grants. She also reported on CAP's other  
39 programs and initiatives, such as the Spring Writes Literary Festival, the annual Ithaca Artists Market, the  
40 CAP Art Space gallery, the Greater Ithaca Art Trail, artist networking events, professional development  
41 workshops, a public sculpture project in Enfield, and the Poet Laureate program. During the Q&A, the  
42 group discussed the Ithaca Artists Market, the timing of grant application cycles, and the late distribution  
43 of NYS Council on the Arts funding. The possibility of an Artist Laureate program to recognize visual artists  
44 was also raised.

45

### **Membership & Bylaws Committee** – *Doug Levine*

46 Group discussed the committee's proposed bylaws changes, including virtual attendee quorum, reduced  
47 arts and culture representation, expanded agriculture category, allocating at-large seats for arts and  
48 culture, non-voting airport representative seat, and clarifying the "transportation" representative's role.  
49 The committee will reconvene to discuss feedback and determine next steps. In the meantime, board  
50 members are encouraged to review the draft bylaws and submit comments or questions.

51

### **Report/Action: Recommend voting members for reappointment**

52 Doug Levine, on behalf of the Membership & Nomination Committee, presented the slate of voting  
53 members up for reappointment in 2025. He shared that Jeff Golden is also in the process of being  
54 reappointed to his seat by Ithaca College.

55

56 **Action:** Kelly Makosch moved to recommend Rick Manning (At-Large), Doug Levine (Arts-Culture), Laura  
57 Winter Falk (At-Large), Teri Tarsus (At-Large), and Ken Jupiter (At-Large) for reappointment to the Strategic  
58 Tourism Planning Board. Marian Levy Ware seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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60 Next, the group discussed reserve fund management, aiming to balance future project savings with current  
61 operational needs, especially given the increased reserve percentage. They also talked about airport  
62 funding, with the conversation exploring the community's financial commitment, including construction  
63 debt and repayment obligations. Potential solutions included exploring alternative revenue sources like  
64 passenger facility charges, analyzing airport usage data, forming partnerships, and seeking input from  
65 airport representatives. The conversation highlighted the complexities of airport funding, emphasizing the  
66 need for data-driven decision-making, transparency, and careful consideration of various factors.

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### **Member Announcements**

68 Members shared upcoming events like the Brooktondale Apple Festival, the Warren Miller Film Tour at  
69 State Theatre, the Clements Brothers band concert, the Greater Ithaca Art Trail, and the Winter Village  
70 Music Camp. Peggy updated group on Agriculinary Tourism Microgrants round, and Chuck sought leads for  
71 safe space training for hospitality workers.

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73 **Adjournment** – Vice Chair Doug Levine adjourned the meeting at 4:34pm.

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