

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

1 **Date:** Dec. 17, 2025
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm
 3 **Location:** Old Jail/Via Zoom

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5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Sarah Barden	P	At-Large	Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture
Amanda Bisson	P	TC3	Teri Tarshus	P	Lodging
Brett Bossard	P	At-Large	Marian Levy Ware	E	At-Large
Laura Winter Falk	P	Agriculinary	<i>Megan Barber</i>	P	<i>CAP, Non-voting</i>
Jeff Golden	P	Ithaca College	<i>Rob Montana</i>	A	<i>Chamber, Non-voting</i>
Alexis Zaharis Grimm	P	Lodging	<i>Frank Doldo</i>	P	<i>Transportation, Non-voting</i>
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large	<i>Suzanne Smith Jablonski</i>	E	<i>IDCC, Non-voting</i>
Doug Levine	P	At-Large	<i>Kurt Anderson</i>	A	<i>IAED, Non-voting</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Nan Rohrer</i>	A	<i>DIA, Non-voting</i>
Rick Manning	E	Recreation	<i>Mike Sigler</i>	A	<i>TC Legislature, Non-voting</i>
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	<i>Peggy Coleman</i>	P	<i>CVB, Non-voting</i>
Bethany Parisi	E	Arts-Culture	<i>Michael Miller</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	Nick Helmholdt	P	Tourism Program Director
Monika Roth	P	Agriculinary	Kristin McCarthy	P	County Staff
Jason Sidle	P	At-Large			

6 **Guests:** Jeanne Goddard, Chris Stephany

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8 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda/Privilege of the Floor** – Chair Doug Levine called the meeting to
 9 order at 3:07pm. There were no changes to the agenda or privilege of the floor requests.

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11 **Action: Approval of November 2025 STPB Draft Minutes** – The November draft meeting minutes were
 12 approved (motion by Brett Bossard, second by Kelly Makosch) as submitted.

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14 **Chair's Report** – *Doug Levine*

15 Doug reported on board membership candidates, sharing that the Membership & Bylaws Committee has
 16 identified candidates for the Arts-Culture seat and the At-Large position, while noting the Recreation seat
 17 remains open. He also informed the board about a statement printed in the Town of Danby newsletter
 18 from an outgoing County Legislature member regarding arts funding.

19 **Staff Report** – *Nick Helmholdt*

20 Nick reported on 2026 budget contracts, encouraging recipients to respond promptly to contract emails.
 21 Additionally, he shared an update on the short-term rental registration system, which opened in late
 22 November. Feedback on the new system has generally been positive. Discussion followed regarding the
 23 registration fee structure, hosting platforms, and compliance and enforcement. Nick also announced that
 24 the Spring 2026 tourism grant cycle would go live soon, with applications due Feb. 26.

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

26 Doug Levine reported on behalf of the committee and presented two candidates for board appointment.

27

28 **Action:** Michelle Kortenaar (At-Large) and Megan Omohundro (Arts-Culture) were recommended for
 29 appointment by the Tompkins County Legislature to the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (motion by Doug
 30 Levine, second by Ken Jupiter). Motion carried.

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32 **Presentation: Community Arts Partnership** – *Megan Barber*

33 Megan provided an overview of CAP's mission to support artists and enrich the region's cultural landscape,
34 outlining the organization's three main grant programs (NYSCA Statewide Community Regrant, Strategic
35 Opportunity Stipend, and ACOD) and various initiatives connecting artists and audiences, including Spring
36 Writes Literary Festival, Ithaca Artist Market, CAP ArtSpace, Greater Ithaca Art Trail, Open Studio
37 Weekends, the Poet Laureate program, artist professional development workshops, the Enfield public
38 sculpture program, and the new CHARM mural initiative. She noted challenges including federal funding
39 cuts and soft attendance since the pandemic, while emphasizing the arts' community-building role and
40 economic impact. During discussion, Megan identified advocacy and information dispersal as critical needs
41 given the difficulty of reaching audiences through declining traditional media and crowded digital spaces,
42 while explaining that new grant programs are manageable with current capacity though expanded
43 programming would require additional staffing.

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45 **Member Announcements** – Members shared items of interest including sold-out Kitchen Theatre
46 productions, the upcoming Rutabaga Curl event, and open CAP grant applications with February deadlines.
47 Winter initiatives funded in part by the Tourism Program are demonstrating strong return on investment,
48 with Winter Music Fest generating 200 room nights and other programming producing overnight and
49 repeat visitation. Peggy updated group on the director of sales search, successful winter campaign results,
50 and more Visit Ithaca activities. Other announcements included an update on the airport, a holiday sneak
51 peek at Found in Ithaca, and John Mulaney appearing at the State Theatre in March.

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53 **Discussion: Recognition of Brett Bossard, Rick Manning, Greg Mezey, and Steven Stull**

54 Nick presented certificates of appreciation to departing board members, with Rick's to be presented at a
55 later date. Greg and Steven were each recognized for six years of service, with Greg providing important
56 legislative connections through Budget Committee work and Steven offering steadfast arts and culture
57 support. Brett was honored for nine years of service, including two years as chair during COVID recovery.

58 **Adjournment** – Chair Doug Levine adjourned the meeting at 4:02pm.