

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

1 **Date:** September 16, 2020
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Virtual Meeting – Zoom Video Conference
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5 **Attendees:**

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	Megan Barber	P	CAP, Non-Voting
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	Peggy Coleman	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Laura Winter Falk	P	At-Large	Gary Ferguson	P	DIA, Non-Voting
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture	Anna Kelles	P	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Connie Kan	P	At-Large	Heather McDaniel	P	TCAD, Non-Voting
VACANT	N/A	Lodging	Jennifer Tavares	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	Scot Vanderpool	A	Transportation, Non-Voting
Kelly Makosch	P	At-Large	Jim Brophy	A	Associate Member
Rick Manning	E	At-Large	Erica Frenay	A	Associate Member
Erin Martea	P	At-Large	Henry Granison	P	Associate Member
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	Ken Jupiter	P	Associate Member
VACANT	N/A	Ithaca College	Carol Kammen	A	Associate Member
Todd Parlato	P	At-Large	Michael Miller	P	Associate Member
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	Jon Reis	P	Associate Member
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture	Wylie Schwartz	P	Associate Member
Deb Mohlenhoff	E	TC3	Nick Helmholdt	P	TP Director
Steven Stull	P	Arts-Culture	Kristin McCarthy	P	TCDPS
Scott Wiggins	E	At-Large			

8 **Guests:** Tom Knipe, Graham Savio, Katie Borgella, Kurt Anderson
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10 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Chair Kelli Cartmill welcomed everyone to the meeting.
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12 **Privilege of the Floor** – None
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14 **Action: Approval of August 2020 STPB Meeting Minutes** – Erin Martea moved approval of the draft August
 15 19, 2020 minutes. Doug Levine seconded the motion, which was passed by the members present with one
 16 correction (Steven Stull was incorrectly marked as excused when he had been present) and one abstention
 17 (Barbara Romano).
 18

19 **Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill**

20 Kelli expressed her appreciation to committee members for their continued work. She encouraged
 21 members to spread the word about the vacant lodging seat on the board to prospective candidates.
 22

23 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

24 Nick introduced Wendy Kobler, the new proposed Ithaca College representative to the STPB. He also
 25 reported on developments regarding changes to the room tax law, including a survey requested by the
 26 Tompkins County Legislature, and to the STPB recommendations for the 2021 County budget due in large
 27 part to findings of July STR report. Last, he spent a few moments speaking to the passing of Wally Wiggins
 28 and asked members to keep Scott Wiggins and his family in their thoughts. A sympathy card was sent on
 29 behalf of the STPB. Discussion covered legislative decision-making behind small lodging survey, intended
 30 audience, and outreach strategy; whether budget committee should meet to revise spending

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31 recommendations pursuant to further 8% proposed decrease to certain parts of Tourism Program budget;
32 and clarification on whether STPB committees can proceed with their work items.

33

CVB Update – Peggy Coleman

35 Peggy shared news from the CVB. Highlights included Taughannock visitation numbers, marketing team
36 activities, web traffic numbers, preparations for cider season, and group sales team initiatives such as
37 offering virtual tours to meeting planner organizations.

38

Public Art Update – Megan Barber

40 Megan informed the group of developments with the public art program administered through Community
41 Arts Partnership (CAP), in particular focusing on the Taughannock Giant sculpture and budget challenges
42 connected to its construction. She and the CAP board are re-envisioning how public art funding might be
43 commissioned and expended given unprecedented circumstances brought about by the pandemic.
44 Thoughts include focusing on projects that promote community, resiliency, and hope.

45

Conference Center Update – Gary Ferguson

47 Steering committee meets at least once a week to review plans with developer (Vecino Group). An RfP for
48 an operator is out and hope is to contract with someone by year's end. Budget is almost finalized and
49 group is working closely with Vecino on financing mechanisms. The Downtown Ithaca Local Development
50 Corporation was created with Jennifer Tavares, Gary Ferguson, and Tom Knipe serving as members. They
51 are writing bylaws now so they can build a larger board with members reflective of the tourism industry.
52 Construction likely to start in March 2021 and open spring or summer of 2023. Kelly Makosch asked about
53 DOT auction site, for which Arnot Realty was the high bidder. Gary didn't know details but said they
54 typically develop housing. Jennifer said her interactions with Arnot on other projects have been positive.

55

Membership & Bylaws Committee Update – Doug Levine and Nick Helmholdt

57 Few changes have been made to the STPB bylaws since 2012. Discussion touched on reimagining lodging
58 seats, such as having one dedicated to small lodging operators versus larger hotels and ways to bring short
59 term rental owners into the fold. Other topics included improved onboarding in terms of educating new
60 members; recruitment process and filling vacancies in light of COVID-related challenges; role of associate
61 members; improving board diversity, and membership details like term limits and residency requirements.

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63 **Member Announcements** – Members shared news items and events of interest to the group.

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65 Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm.

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