

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

1 **Date:** March 16, 2022
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Virtual Meeting – Zoom Video Conference

4

5 **Attendees:**

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

6 **Guests:** Rachael Atkins-Walpole, Rosemary Avila, Mila Fournier, Jordan Herson, Sarah Imes, Cloud Kelley,
 7 Deirdre Kurzweill, Jodi LaPierre, Rob Montana, Erin Rafalowski, Scott Rougeau, Ryan Shehu, J.C. Swain,
 8 Teri Tarshus

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10 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda/Privilege of the Floor** – Chair Brett Bossard called meeting to
 11 order at 3:03pm. No changes to the agenda. No members of the public spoke for privilege of the floor.

12 **Action: Approval of February 2022 STPB Meeting Minutes** – The draft February minutes were approved as
 13 submitted (motion by Steven Stull, seconded by Marian Levy Wilson). Motion carried.

14 **Chair’s Report – Brett Bossard**

15 Brett provided a brief update on the work of the Planning & Evaluation and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 16 Committees but ceded most of his time due to the full agenda.

17

18 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

19 Ten applications totaling \$100,000 in requested funds (with \$50,000 available) have been received for the
 20 Tompkins Outdoors Grant program and are under review by the grant panel. In addition, the Membership
 21 & Bylaws Committee will be interviewing candidates shortly for the vacant at-large seat, and preparations
 22 for the draft 2023 Tourism Program budget are underway.

23

24 **Presentation: Ithaca/Tompkins County CVB 2021 Annual Report – Peggy Coleman and Staff**

25 Peggy and staff from the marketing, public relations, sales, visitor experience, and other teams shared
 26 highlights from the CVB’s 2021 Annual Report. The presentation recapped their efforts to support and
 27 increase visitation to Tompkins County year-round, with emphasis on encouraging people to extend their
 28 stays and on attracting winter visitors. It covered key performance metrics, including website, digital, and
 29 social media traffic and engagement data, as well as insights into visitor demographics. They spoke about
 30 inspirational advertising and marketing messaging, Instagram and Facebook campaigns, and user-generated

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31 content. Other highlights included a weekly series for visitors pairing food and beverage partners with
32 nearby activities, the Visit Ithaca Waterfalls Challenge digital pass, local cider promotions, media inquiries
33 related to safe travel post-COVID, developing relationships with writers and other content creators, and
34 accessibility. The visitor experience team reported on Ithaca Loves Teacher Week, traffic at the Overlook at
35 Taughannock Visitor Center, website chat function, virtual Ithaca 101 classes, and networking opportunities
36 for local partners. Other updates touched on the downtown community conference center, the agricultural
37 tourism microgrant program, and critical advocacy work done on short term rental legislation, workforce
38 development, and expansion of Paycheck Protection Program to CVBs and other 501 c (6) organizations.
39

Update: Tompkins Festivals Program – Scott Rougeau, Downtown Ithaca Alliance

40 Scott’s presentation covered the history of the Festivals program, its guiding principles, and the types of
41 services offered. These include technical assistance in the form of proof-of-concept review for events, help
42 networking with vendors, investigating potential venues and permitting issues, marketing and public
43 outreach expertise, and metrics reporting for grant requirements. In addition, the program offers a free
44 equipment rental program and hosts event planning workshops. Over the years, the program has assisted
45 with musical events such as Reggae Fest, sporting events like the SUP CUP, and cultural programming such
46 as First Peoples Festival. He talked about the program’s “reboot” post-COVID, sharing that its technical
47 assistance component, which is available to anyone in Tompkins County, had the shortest pause and he’s
48 fielded calls from several organizations and individuals looking to host events in the coming months. He
49 referenced new challenges, including the requirement of safety plan permits for outdoor events of 1,000
50 attendees or more held within City and Town of Ithaca. Scott and his staff hope to host a two-day in-person
51 event planning workshop in late April. Workshops in past years have averaged 15-25 participants, with a
52 mix of new and experienced event organizers in attendance.
53

Report/Action: Community Celebrations Grant Review Committee – Carol Kammen, County Historian

54
55 Committee chair Carol Kammen reported on the applications submitted in this grant round and thanked
56 her fellow committee members and County staff for their support of the Community Celebrations
57 program. Seventeen applications were received, with the committee recommending 14 for funding. There
58 was \$29,860 in grant requests, and \$20,000 in available funding. A total of \$17,050 in funding was
59 recommended, with \$2,950 in unspent funds remaining. This amount will be added to the \$10,000 already
60 allotted for the Fall 2022 Community Celebrations Grant round, for a total of \$12,950 in available funding
61 remaining for the fall round of grants.
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63
64 **Action:** Marian Levy Wilson made a motion, which Kelly Makosch seconded, to recommend the 2022
65 Spring Community Celebrations grant awards be approved for funding. Steven Stull and Rick Manning
66 abstained. Motion carried by members present.
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Report/Action: Tourism Project & Tourism Marketing Grant Review Committee – Kelly Makosch

68 Kelly provided an overview of the applications submitted in this round and thanked her fellow committee
69 members and County staff for their support of the Tourism Project and Tourism Marketing Grant
70 programs. In total 16 applications were received, with the committee recommending 10 for funding.
71 Applicants requested \$110,600 in grants, with \$55,000 in funding available (\$45,000 in Tourism Project
72 grants, and \$10,000 in Tourism Marketing grants). She highlighted the mix of returning and new events
73 and diversity of groups applying. The brief Q&A discussion touched on merits of fully funding fewer events
74 versus partially funding more as well as other issues.
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77 **Action:** Doug Levine made a motion, which Marian Levy Wilson seconded, to recommend that the 2022
78 Spring Tourism Project & Tourism Marketing grant awards be approved for funding. Rick Manning and
79 Steven Stull abstained. Motion carried by members present.

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81 **Member Announcements** – Members shared news of interest regarding Opera Ithaca, Community
82 Beautification Brigade, Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, Atlas Bowl, Finger Lakes Environmental Film
83 Festival, St. Patrick’s Day fun at Kilpatrick’s, Winter Village Music Camp, and more.

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85 **Adjournment** – Chair Brett Bossard adjourned the meeting at 4:20pm.