

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

1 **Date:** June 16, 2021
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Virtual Meeting – Zoom Video Conference

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 5 **Attendees:**

Member		Representation	Member		Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Megan Barber</i>	P	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging	<i>Peggy Coleman</i>	P	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Laura Winter Falk	E	At-Large	<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	A	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Henry Granison</i>	E	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Connie Kan	P	At-Large	<i>Heather McDaniel</i>	E	<i>IEAD, Non-Voting</i>
Arthur Keith	P	Lodging	<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	P	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Wendy Kobler	E	Ithaca College	<i>Vacant</i>		<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture	<i>Jim Brophy</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Kelly Makosch	P	Recreation	<i>Erica Frenay</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Rick Manning	E	At-Large	<i>Ken Jupiter</i>	E	<i>Associate Member</i>
Erin Marteau	E	At-Large	<i>Carol Kammen</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Greg Mezey	P	At-Large	<i>Michael Miller</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Todd Parlato	E	At-Large	<i>Jon Reis</i>	E	<i>Associate Member</i>
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University	<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture	<i>Nick Helmholdt</i>	P	<i>Tourism Program Director</i>
Deb Mohlenhoff	P	TC3	<i>Kristin McCarthy</i>	P	<i>TCDPS</i>
Steven Stull	E	Arts-Culture			
Scott Wiggins	A	At-Large			

7 **Guests:** Mila Fournier

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 9 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – Chair Kelli Cartmill called meeting to order at 3:10pm. No
 10 changes to the agenda.

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 12 **Action: Approval of May 2021 STPB Meeting Minutes** – The draft May meeting minutes were approved as
 13 submitted (motion by Greg Mezey, seconded by Doug Levine).

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 15 **Privilege of the Floor** – None

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 17 **Chair's Report – Kelli Cartmill**
 18 Kelli reported on STPB vacancies and asked members for their help in getting the word out and board
 19 recruitment in general. She also touched on the important role members can play in terms of public
 20 outreach, education, and engagement on tourism and hospitality industry issues.

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 22 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**
 23 Nick reported on a member-filed resolution (M. Robertson) that would add \$573,000 to the 2021 Tourism
 24 Program budget from the county's contingent fund. Once it passes through the Housing and Economic
 25 Development Committee, the resolution will go to the full County Legislature for a vote on July 6. He also
 26 shared news about contract amendments with partners such as the Convention and Visitors Bureau and
 27 Downtown Ithaca Alliance, preparations for a fall Community Celebrations grant round, the county's survey

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28 seeking public input on American Rescue Plan funds, a June 22nd launch event for Cayuga Lake Blueway
29 Trail, and the possible upcoming expiration of the open meetings law extension issued by Governor Cuomo
30 as part of the state’s COVID-19 declaration of emergency.

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32 **Action: Recommend 2022 Tourism Program Budget – Josh Friedman, on behalf of Budget Committee**

33 Josh Friedman gave a quick overview of the proposed 2022 Tourism Program budget, which the members
34 had discussed in more detail at the June STPB meeting.

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36 **Action:** Josh Friedman moved, and Greg Mezey seconded, to recommend the 2022 Tourism Program
37 budget. Motion carried.

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39 **Update: Tourism Recovery Committee – Kelli Cartmill**

40 Kelli gave an overview of recent activities of the Tourism Recovery Committee, which has been focused on
41 issues such as how to best address widespread staffing shortages in local hotels and restaurants.
42 Committee members have been engaging with stakeholders throughout community on the most effective
43 ways to attract and retain workers as well as developing a campaign for increasing tourism demand in the
44 winter. STPB members then broke into smaller groups to brainstorm around lessons learned during the
45 pandemic and ways to advocate for tourism recovery in the immediate term. Themes that emerged from
46 the discussion included need for advocacy at the municipal and county level (i.e., legislators need to hear
47 from a variety of stakeholders, especially those directly impacted economically by the pandemic, such as
48 small businesses); importance of having a specific “ask” when approaching elected officials for support;
49 staffing problems and data collection on barriers to filling positions (e.g. childcare, healthcare,
50 transportation), as well as ways to provide ancillary support to address such needs; strategic workforce
51 development for industry; a public outreach campaign encouraging people to be patient and tolerant when
52 patronizing restaurants and eateries, many of which are understaffed; advocating for American Rescue Plan
53 funds going toward community conference center; increasing Tourism Program reserve funds; more virtual
54 infrastructure and in-market promotion; construction of a new bus depot (not on Green Street), benefits
55 of Zoom (more accessibility); and establishing more connections with regional economic development
56 groups, along with other ideas.

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58 **Member Announcements** – Members shared news regarding early voting and June 22 primary elections,
59 reopening of Cinemapolis, Music in the (Ellis) Hollow summer concert series, Ithaca Artist Market,
60 Downtown Ithaca concert series, and weekly Club Cayuga Cruises hosted by Discover Cayuga Lake.

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