




Mt. Irenaeus
Board of Trustees Meeting via Zoom
Minutes
February 6, 2021

Present:	Paul Aroune Rob Buckla Kevin Cleary Mike Fossaceca Diane Kuzia-Hills Jackie Lanzillo Greg Licamele Terri Marrie Mike Muffoletto Karen Pulaski Dan Riley, ofm Otto Rothermel Kate Trosch Anthony Billoni Mike Fenn Mary Giardini Joe Kotula, ofm Kevin Kriso, ofm Lou McCormick, ofm Mary Schlosser	Excused:
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Meeting began with introductions, prayer, break out groups and discussions.

Reports from Ministry team:




Council for Spirit and Life –

-  Weekends and More have had multiple Zoom calls. The technology has really improved at the Mountain. We are getting together a forum on Mountain media. Almost 3000 Instagram's, a lot of podcasts, working with Shannon, more. The Mountain wants to be out there. We have been able to expand our ministry due to this Branch.
-  We have media cooking everywhere but what are we saying that is creation based and full of hope and life? What are we saying that is along with our mission?
-  Mike Fenn and Dan have been trying to reach out to the Young Alumni – worried about growth and personnel and where are we with the people who used to call this home and how to bring them back. Mike Muffoletto is a leader with the Young Alum group, he is working with Ian




McBride, Lilly Whelan, and others. Mike Fenn is going to take the lead on this as it “falls under Advancement.”

-  Dan reached out to Luke Brown, a Trustee at SBU, about the racism issue. There are layers of reality that call for conversation. Dan feels that some people felt that the Mountain was a safe place, possibly the only safe place for them because people on campus say hurtful things. Dean James wants to use MIH as a vehicle for conversations about racism.
-  Karen P. commented that she feels we are so much more active and able. Have been able to do evenings & afternoons of retreat via Zoom. With Zoom we can meet much more frequently and growth has come from that option. Karen is a leader in the Initiation and Education Branch. The Council is seeing a pathway to become enmeshed and part of all the work the Mountain does.
-  Terri M. added that there is important energy to be highlighted from the Council. People from all over are trying to find time to reflect and become part of the Mountain. Some of these people have no experience of Bonas. We need to keep people knowing there is space for everyone even if they can't come to the Mountain. The Advent event that was held was important to people and people were checking in and out.






Electronic Media Branch –

-  Greg Licamele – We are broadcasting the seed, the Word of God. How do we coordinate a bit more and move in the same direction? We need a content plan that leads into a capital plan. Who are the different people in our circle who can help animate Dan's work on various channels? The Mountain isn't a brand, it's a canvas and what we can do on that canvas is incredible. How do we translate that to our various tools?
-  Mike Muffoletto – Young Alumni group has been really great, he was hesitant at first because he has to be on so many Zoom meetings for work and getting burned out on them. The Young Alumni group has been great and a lot of connections are being built. This is casting a broad net for people and trying to keep the personal connections. The next meeting coming up is for Ash Wednesday, this gives a chance to be a community.
-  Br. Joe commented on the fact that the Zoom events we have been having, came about because other people suggested it, not the friars, but the people who are connected to the Mountain and wanted to see more. Br. Joe has enjoyed working with Don Smith and the other leaders of this Branch.





The news ways Kevin, Dan and Mike Fenn have been working as a team –

-  A lot more Zoom.
-  Looking at possibilities and expansion and going deeper with each other.
-  Had a conversation with Greg Jakubowicz, ofm and Russel Murray, ofm. When they talk there is a synergy and they work closer with us. Fr. Greg's main concern was keeping us from getting sick and closing and he wasn't talking about mission. The SBU friars and Mountain friars work together well. There has been a call from Advancement at school to not only to engage alumni in that direction, but we need to bring the school to people in meaningful ways to support their




ongoing life and learning. Faculty development and Fr. Russel worked on a statement on Franciscan identity and they will be speaking with new and old faculty about what is Franciscan education and what does that mean.

-  Kevin and Dan have been working with friars who are in an interest group for hermitages, houses of prayer and contemplation. There are 4 friars who are interested in moving forward. Hopefully we will have something to offer the Order. All of our contemplative fraternities in mission need to have something to offer to become a more contemplative fraternity.
-  Mike Fenn stated that he, Kevin and Dan are working hard on how they can work together more effectively. They meet every couple of weeks for a few hours. Relationships are important to us.
-  They have let Fr. Greg and Fr. Russel know that we want to work alongside them.
-  For the last 5 years we have been trying to work closer with the Province. It is important for our voice to be represented in these meetings with the larger groups of the Province.
-  We are inviting young alumni back into our lives and engaging them. We have 20 or so ambassadors who are back in our lives who want to help. We would not have dreamt of Facebook live 12 months ago.

Financial position –

-  Mike Fenn spoke to the fact that last year we had a record breaking year of Mountain Fund donations (about \$260K) and so far this year we are already at \$270K. A couple years ago we were nervous about making our goals, now we are exceeding them. Perhaps this is because we have engaged our friends when they really needed us most (during the pandemic) and now they have been supporting us more than ever (financially).
-  Rob pointed out that there is a nimbleness that is at the Mountain – we can move quickly to address needs. Spiritual needs, racial angst, etc. We can move quickly on that, but other larger corporations would take months to do it. We don't do it for money but because it's the right thing to do. The friar's ability to hear and see needs helps us to be successful.
-  Dan believes we are talking about our operational model – an unconscious need to reach out. We find our resources as we go. It is a kind of home-spun model. This is a very simple, but an operational model that works well for us.
-  Mike pointed out that when they spoke to Fr. Russel about the racism conversations that the Mountain has been having and Fr. Russel stated that if Bona's tried to make that happen it would be caught up in red tape, waiting for decisions on how to proceed, etc., but the Mountain is getting it done. Russel pointed out that the Mountain can do things that the University can't do.

Tony Billoni on his interviews with Mountain community–

-  Have close to 30 interviews done.
-  Organized all the answers into a transcript and spreadsheet. He, Mike and the friars will delve deeper into this spreadsheet soon.
-  His visit to the Mountain was something he talked about to everyone. He likes to embed himself with the group he is working with so he can get the feel of the organization. He was integrated, “fell in” to the experience. Welcomed. We are so welcoming and eager to have people join.

- ✚ Rob pointed out that WNY is thought of as unappealing to live in, which is not correct. Tony agreed that we need to present it in a better light so people want to come here.
- ✚ Tony said that some of the statements he is presenting were even more pointed than he shared.
- ✚ It was pointed out that we absolutely need religious at the Mountain, but there are a declining amount. We need to work on non-religious coming to minister at the Mountain.

Logistics going forward from the report-

- ✚ To the interviewees – these are their facts and they are important.
- ✚ Over the next few months we will sift through these and that will direct what will be done at the Strategic Planning event we want to hold. It will be similar to the Mountain Board meeting with prayer, meal, so as to get participants in the correct mindset so as to get information from them.
- ✚ Tony uses a concept he calls “SOAR” (strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results). Take all the concerns opportunities and turn them into aspirations. It will be done over a couple of days and then a smaller group will sift through the outcome. The larger group will do brainstorming and the smaller Board-centered group we will digest those that we can take on and those become the final suggestions that we will add detail to and start taking tangible steps.
- ✚ Dan pointed out that we have gone through other planning sessions, but Tony’s is a deeper dive into this process.
- ✚ Dan is convinced in the Mountain’s life, but it is not easy to get people to follow through and find their way here. That could become an opportunity.
- ✚ Tony added that as good as we feel coming out of the process, there will be work because it is new stuff. This could be an article in a non-profit journal of how to succeed during Covid.

BYLAWS –

Otto presented the final version and had no further comments since the last changes. All the changes were made and it’s a wonderful document.

MOTION:

Paul Aroune – makes a motion to accept the BYLAWS as presented. Jackie Lanzillo seconds the motion. The full Board approves.

Rob thanks Otto for his patience and listening. Salutes him for all he does. Dianne thanks everyone for their time, care and commitment.

Solar panel project -

- ✚ Paul gave the solar report.
- ✚ There was a Zoom 2 weeks ago to discuss it. Solar panels have become more efficient and smaller so we need even less space than we originally thought.
- ✚ Sarino Tropeano worked on the placement. From the place they chose in September, they moved it about 300 feet SW and it’s still a really good spot.
- ✚ They will be 2-3 feet off the ground at the front. Each panel at 8 foot high, but because of the topography of the land (slope) the top one would be about 8 feet off the ground.
- ✚ This move will take it out of sight.









- ✚ Paul said that we could make it a bragging point and maybe even have a named hiking path to it, a point of interest.
- ✚ Dianne – we should be proud of this and we might want to consider having an event or blessing of the panels so that it's not a "foreign thing."
- ✚ Greg – maybe some simple signage of how it fits into our mission – as a permanent educational feature. Dan likes the idea and said perhaps we could add a couple of benches and a quasi-coffee table so it invites people in, moves it out of a functional modality, but into a fruitful modality.
- ✚ Paul – cost: \$88,236 minus a discount we received, 26% federal tax credit, and bonus depreciation. Final cost: \$29,532.12. (This would be dependent on finding a donor to mortgage the project and use the tax credits.)
- ✚ Can we find a donor to cover it? Mike Fenn said as an Advancement team it has not been discussed yet. But the project is moving forward.
- ✚ Next steps: It is powering the Mountain first and then any overage (about 15%) will give as an annual balance with the electric company that can accumulate. There is a breaker that can be thrown between solar panel and RG&E. It's a 2 way street so that we can either put into the grid or draw from it. Overages can either build up or be donated to needy families.

MOTION:


Paul Aroune moves to go forward with solar panel array project pending either a donor to mortgage or a project goal through the Advancement Committee to find donors to offset the cost and take the advantage of tax breaks. Mike Fossaceca seconds the motion. The full Board approves.

Board Successioning – Kevin Cleary:



- ✚ WE need 12 Board member per bylaws.
- ✚ Had a meeting to discuss members.
- ✚ When we have individuals we think could be good candidates we ask them about joining a committee first and then bring them along the journey.
- ✚ Impressed with Luke Brown (part of Dan's "Racial Injustice" discussion group and was thinking of approaching him, he is a priority.
- ✚ Tony Minchella sent resignation letter in January.
- ✚ Mike Fossaceca is leaving in September.
- ✚ Would like to have a new list mid-February for the Board to consider.
- ✚ Mike Fossaceca endorses Luke Brown and would also add Steve Barry to the list, he is originally from Olean.
- ✚ Dan, Terri and Karen will stay in touch with Kevin Cleary so that they can companion him and see what the candidates walk is in faith.
- ✚ Pointed out that work with the Mountain and in the committees is essential.
- ✚ This helps to know if the potential Board member feel like they fit and if the Mountain feeds them in some way.
- ✚ Kevin Kriso suggests Kristen McMahon.
- ✚ Mike Fossaceca also suggests Laurie Krupa.

-  Greg L. suggested looking at former Board members.
-  Kevin Cleary wants to watch to make sure people know that it will be a significant time commitment and not to leave shortly after they get on.
-  Karen Pulaski suggests Wendy Mann.
-  Katie stated that we need to move on these people quickly or the bylaws will need to be changed.
-  Dianne – when we bring in people with diverse backgrounds we need to bring them in as a cohort so they aren't “the only one.”
-  Kevin Cleary asked if there are students who are on the path to stay in communication and see if they can start with committees and involvement so that they can eventually step in when needed.
-  Other names suggested: Sr. Kathleen M., Keith, Colleen Kristich, Melinda Hall, Tim Schaffer, Dennis Culhane, Sean Sood, Patty Grip.
-  Please touch base with Kevin Cleary if you have more names/info.

Advancement Committee – Jackie Lanzillo:

-  Thank you from the Advancement Committee – we have exceeded our Mt. Fund goal and there's still 300 people out there who usually give.

Mountain Companions –

-  If you have any ideas about people who could become Mountain Companions, please send information to Mike Fenn. Mike is on a committee with 6 other groups trying to promote this program. We are the only live-in situation – the others are things like soup kitchens or homeless shelters, etc.
-  Rob suggested that people are looking for places to escape the big cities and we should be looking for them.

Meeting closed with prayer.

Next meeting: