

Mt. Irenaeus
Board of Trustees Meeting
April 30, 2022
Minutes

Present: Paul Aroune
Kathy Colucci
Matricia James
Dianne Kuzia Hills
Jackie Lanzillo
Greg Licamele (Zoom)
Terri Marrie
Mike New
Karen Pulaski
Dan Riley, ofm
Otto Rothermel
Sarino Tropeano (Zoom)
Kate Trosch (Zoom)

Excused: Rob Buckla

Mike Fenn
Mary Giardini
Joe Kotula, ofm
Kevin Kriso, ofm
Michelle Marcellin
Lou McCormick, ofm
Steve Patti, ofm

Meeting began with prayer, silence and discussion of “The Common Life at Mt. Irenaeus.”


The new Board of Trustees Officers were acknowledged:

Chair – Paul Aroune
Vice Chair – Terri Marrie
Secretary – Greg Licamele
Treasurer – Kate Trosch

Board thanks the outgoing Officers for their service.

Management and Ministry team reports:

Kevin Kriso –

 Talked more about the “Common Life at Mt. Irenaeus” document he constructed.

- + Working toward the renewal of the Mountain and Strategic Planning.
- + It's been very productive.
- + Working on modeling, not just saying, what life is like here.
- + Continuing to discuss who else can join us in our ministry and life at the Mountain.
- + What can others take up so that we can focus on other parts of life here?
- + Seriously working on getting Companions: Karen Pulaski will begin a year in June. Have been talking with a young man, Kevin Fox, who is thinking of applying.
- + Solar project is in full swing.
- + Discussions on how we can and do connect with SBU.

Paul thanked Kevin for this document, the hard work he put into getting it together. Paul believes it is tremendously helpful for the group to know this information and details.

Comments:

- + Greg Licamele – our life is something that we give away and that is powerful. It is real and authentic. We give it freely. We give our way of life to others to experience. In today's culture, we get nothing for free. We don't want to profit from this. People have asked if Companions have to pay to come and work at the Mountain.
- + Karen – we do this in a society that tells us we are naïve and it's not going to change anything.
- + Joe – we have the privilege of living here. We call ourselves core community and not friars because it's become more than the friars. Core community means the people residing here, friars or non-friars. They attempt to not OWN this place. Long time ago friars would say we don't own that building, the Pope owns it. It goes back to hospitality and the gift of giving it away. There are places to go and do service work, but you have to pay to go – a contribution to the project. So there is a sense of payment. Some can't go because they cannot pay/contribute.

Mike Fenn –

Strategic Planning process:

- + Reviewed next steps, where we need further support.
- + Changed wording of "Champions" to "Conveners" because not one or two people own these.
- + We know there are people who want to help and participate, but Mike wants to wait until we have concrete work to get done before we ask them to join in.
- + Need to keep in mind people who could help.

Strategic Initiative #1: Reach out to the world.

Dan Riley –

Book project – “Franciscan Lectio: Reading the World Through the Living Word.”

- ✚ The publication has been announced in trade journals.
- ✚ It will be published and available sometime in September.
- ✚ Dan gave a list of reviewers who have received the book and given endorsements. Many of these people are authors themselves.
- ✚ Dan believes this is a blooming part of our life at the Mountain. This can bring people to the Mountain that we have never reached before.

Karen Pulaski –

Council for Spirit and Life:

- ✚ Council is expanding – not just having Council retreats. The retreats this summer include Board members, young alumni, Sojourner group and more.
- ✚ Constructing a more formalized formation process. Karen is working on concrete resources for new Companions. Considering a symposium where we invite people to speak at the Mountain. We want to be a center of excellence for the Franciscans.
- ✚ Terri is sending an email invite to Board. All are welcome to these summer retreats. They are a time to dwell in community and this space.
- ✚ Also inviting participants to bring their significant other and children. This is not for old/young, single people.

Franciscan Federation Conference–












- ✚ In early June a group from the Mountain will be going to Pittsburgh to participate in this conference.
- ✚ Terri has participated before and said:
 - It is a great experience. One of the richest experiences of Terri’s life.
 - It is very informative.
 - Reminds us that the work we do is not just for this place.
 - Dan was encouraged not to bring young people, but he insisted and the younger people blew the “regulars” away. Amazing energy.
- ✚ The people attending in June are: Paul Aroune, Claire Fisher (summer intern), Karen Pulaski, Mike Fenn, Joe Kotula, Dan Riley and Kevin Kriso.

The Provincial “Big 6” interest group around Ite –

- ✚ This group asked Joe Kotula to help organize their next meeting.
- ✚ Continuing to go forward with another Zoom call.
- ✚ The information that comes from the group will be brought to the Big 6.
- ✚ The life here can be anywhere, but the Mountain gives it away already.






Strategic Initiative #2: Seek others and develop a diverse community.

Mike New and Katie Trosch -

-  Bringing people in is not a new thing here. What we are doing with people joining us is a continuation of what we have always done. It is not about replacing friars, but a normal continuation.
-  Policies and procedures have been developed.
-  Now have Karen here as a one year Companion.
-  Dan reviewed some of the people who have come and gone from the Mountain: Holly Schubert was here for 2 ½ years. Have had other friars here for a time. We are not looking to fill places, but to find the right people to carry the mission.
-  Terri reminded us that this is a remember/reflect/respond process. Looking to evolve and grow.
-  Karen stated that the process is incredibly intentional. Lots of time and space to consider. Communal and individual prayer. Have to be really clear on why you want to do this.
-  Have had a couple people who applied for Companion positions, but were not accepted.
-  We have to let the conversations flow, because if they want to be here the conversation will show that and if not, it will come out. Keep with the process.
-  People are driven and have passions to do things and if it is not to be here, that is great – let them be happy where they want to be. The process let's people make sure this life aligns with what they are about and what they want to do.
-  We are an atmosphere of inclusion, and inclusion leads to a feeling of belonging.
-  Have a group going to New Mexico in July to visit to Center for Action and Contemplation. We believe we can learn a great deal from there way of life.

Strategic Initiative #3 – Ensure Co-Ministry with SBU:

Mike Fossaceca and Dianne Kuzia Hills -

-  How do we get the students integrated? Can we find someone who is an expert and has done research around young people and spirituality?
-  What would hiring a minister mean? What would it look like?
-  How do we make sure what we are doing engages the physical students AND the virtual students? Make sure they know you do not have to be a certain kind of student to enjoy the Mountain and be accepted here.
-  We are working with more departments at SBU to be collaborative. We have found a nice mixture of ways to be integrative with the community.
-  Have not had very many students attending Mass at the Mountain on Sundays, even though we provide transportation.





- ✚ Matrecia asked to get the notice of Sunday mass – perhaps she can encourage some students to attend.
- ✚ Matrecia would like to bring the faculty for a day of unplanned activities so that the core community could tell them what the Mountain has to offer. She has an online MBA group that she would be happy to give to us as a pilot group. Kids listen to the professors, they do not really read the message boards.
- ✚ Kevin stated that we have had some powerful School of Business retreats and would like to use that as a pilot for other schools.
- ✚ Have also had the people from the School of Nursing. They are looking for a way to integrate the Franciscan mission into their mission.
- ✚ Alice and Jim Mahar are having a group of students who are interested in doing service and reflection come to Mountain the week before classes begin in the fall.
- ✚ The Rugby Team has been trying to find dates.
- ✚ Kevin stated that there are a lot of good things going on and this is where having a Coordinator of Ministry to take this on would be very helpful. There is just not enough time in Kevin's day to do it all.
- ✚ Because of COVID we have lost our student leadership/Mountain Community Leaders student group. There is a huge student gap – they don't know who we are any longer. That is why the School of Business relationship is so important to us right now.
- ✚ Dan thinks it would be good to send the new SBU President – Jeff Gingerich – a “welcome package” from the Mountain. Jeff is very mission/service focused – he has been involved with this in the past.
- ✚ Matrecia suggested inviting the President's Council to the Mountain. Kevin noted that the SBU Board may come up during their fall meeting.
- ✚ Mike Fenn made note that we have been trying to speak with Joe Zimmer about the budget and the monies that the Mountain should be getting from SBU. This has not been discussed since Dennis DePerro passed away.

Strategic Initiative #4: Expand the Footprint of the Mountain:

Greg Licamele and Matrecia James –

- ✚ They have been making their way through each section of the Initiative and strategizing how to go forward.
- ✚ Greg pointed out that their step 4.3 (Develop a marketing and digital ministry plan...) is one that connects with all the other Initiatives. Once there is a clear direction they will make a plan, but need more information from the other Initiatives first.
- ✚ They are being deliberate and intentional on this work so they do not have to redo it later.

Comments:








-  There has been a lot of work done on getting Wi-Fi signals to other buildings at the Mountain. The infrastructure for it is finally happening and that will help us expand the footprint – through on line media.
-  Greg pointed out that the Triduum was fully live streamed. We need to find people to help move us forward.
-  How do we bring light to social media/digital space?
-  Our on line outreach is helping people feel more a part of the Mountain.

Karen reflected upon her month at the Mountain. She shared a piece she wrote on her time and experience. It was beautifully written and very authentic. Kathy Colucci and Mike Fenn think we should keep a copy to help others who will be entering as a Companion.



Kevin shared information about the two retreats Karen has helped run since being at the Mountain. One was an Intercollegiate Retreat and the other a Women’s Retreat. Kevin thanked Karen for the wonderful job she did at both events. She did not hesitate to jump in and take some leadership. He is very grateful for her time with us.

Strategic Initiative #5: Design and develop a physical Master Plan:

Terri Marrie and Sarino Tropeano -

-  Terri and Sarino have met twice. They feel that their Initiative depends on collaborating with the other groups.
-  The document “Our Common Life” is very beneficial and will help us to move forward.
-  Sarino stated that they need to talk to the core community to find out the needs.
-  They decided to take an inventory of the program right now; what is working, what is not.
-  They are creating a list of what is done at the Mountain and who is involved.
-  Need to re-open the Land Acquisition Committee to look at insulating the property and protect the land we use. (Kevin commented that the Common Life text came out of a discussion about this initiative.)
-  Once we know what activities/events we want to have at the Mountain that will help us understand what sort of buildings we need to house these events.

Comments:

-  We can’t assume that everyone who lives here will be celibate males, so how will our buildings be fitted to house different community members?
-  Having a place for public discourse would be good. A place for people to come, listen and hear.

- + Dan pointed out that we have old site plans that we should look at. Designs that would fit (or not) with what we were thinking at one time. Why did we decide that? Why did we stop?

Dan told the group about a cabin that Bob Lax met in and would talk about things not inclusive of institutions for public discourse. Lax and Merton were life-long friends. It has been suggested that we move that cabin to the Mountain. Would we take the fireplace and some beams or the whole thing? This is currently in discussion within the Mountain regarding who owns the building now and what the cost would be for the move.

Strategic Initiative #6: Create a comprehensive advancement plan:

Kathy Colucci and Jackie Lanzillo –

- + Currently looking for friends who support our vision.
- + Kathy thinks that a “center for civil discourse” would be a project that donors would like to support.
- + Have finalized the job description for an Advancement Director.
- + Along with nurturing the Living Stones of the Mountain it is important to steward our benefactors and give them our personal touch. It is planned to start to meet with key leadership donors to bring them in early as not only donors, but to help with the plan. This is something in which the new Advancement Director will be included.

Budget Review:

- + We continue to be very healthy.
- + Additions to next year’s budget:
 - Two Mountain Companions,
 - Karen Pulaski will begin June 1st as newest Companion
 - In talks with Kevin Fox for second position.
 - Advancement Director,
 - Ministry Director,
 - It was recommended to put the Ministry Director on hold until October and post it then. If October is the posting date, it might be June of 2023 before we fill the position – due to academic calendars and when people are looking for work.
 - Associate Director (project manager).
 - This person would work with Mike and Dan.
 - They would take care of “detail work” to allow Mike to visit with donors more often.
 - Should we hire the Associate Director first and then in 6 months see if we need the Advancement Director?

Comments/Questions:

- ✚ An Advancement Director is harder to find. Would they be able to work remote?
- ✚ Might want to post the Advancement Director position now and see what the market offers us.
- ✚ This person will have a very specific skill set and could take quite a while to find and then they will have to work to come up to speed on Mountain life.
- ✚ If we put the job description out there, we do not have to hire right away.
- ✚ Can we have an open application acceptance for a year and then decide?
- ✚ Tell people that the start date will be a year from now.
- ✚ It might take a year to hire and then a year to bring up to speed.
- ✚ Where will we post the job? Mike stated he is looking at Indeed and LinkedIn. Other suggestions of where to post: the Chronicles, SBU HR, our website.
- ✚ Would we look at using a “headhunter?”
- ✚ We need to make sure we keep the Common Life at the center of our actions/decisions.
- ✚ The first priority is the Associate Director.
- ✚ There is a level of vetting beyond the norm for these positions. Should we put deadlines on the postings?
 - ASAP for Associate Director – relative urgent need,
 - October for the Ministry Director,
 - Between ASAP and October for the Advancement Director.

Actions for moving ahead:

- ✚ Mike, Dan and Kevin will meet to review the job descriptions.
- ✚ Next Personnel Committee meeting is May 16th – will discuss the job descriptions then.
- ✚ Will discuss the Advancement position during the June MELT meeting.
 - It was suggested that the person for this position spend time on the Mountain to learn the life. Perhaps once a month they spend a few days in community.
 - It may be difficult to find a local person for this position, might have to look in a larger city.
- ✚ The Board will move forward with getting the job description approved for the Associate Director. The other two positions will be done and posted with the knowledge that we will not be hiring them for a while.
- ✚ The MELT and/or Personnel will come up with the timelines for all positions.

Discussion on property (Mountain and surrounding):

- ✚ We have the opportunity to buy the Dan Habermehl property.
- ✚ Dan Habermehl is a wonderful friend to the Mountain. We started talking to him a few years ago. He wants to stay on the property until his 70's, he is in his 50's right now.

- ✚ He is planning on parceling off his property. He is going to keep the parcel closest to the Mountain and live there.
- ✚ The people across from him were going to buy each parcel at \$50K and he could use the land.
- ✚ Mike Fenn thinks that Dan H. will ask about \$90K from us for all the land.
- ✚ Market comparison, just north of DH is Norm Pattinson who has 71 acres for \$60K in 2019.
- ✚ Dan H. will not set a price at this time. We might suggest giving him \$50K now and over the course of 15 years we will pay him \$3,996/year which will come out to be \$59,940.
- ✚ Dan Riley suggests Mike Fenn asks Dan H. to have dinner to get to know each other. Dan H. really trusts what the Mountain is about and wants to be a part of it.
- ✚ Dan H. might want to help Joe around the Mountain. He is more than a neighbor now, he is a voice for the local hunters. He might be like a Companion (like Michele Bednar) who comes in once a week to help out. He would be able to help with cutting trees, mowing, etc.
- ✚ While Dan H. is living on the land, the Mountain would not have use of it.
- ✚ This land would help us insulate the Mountain property more.
- ✚ Look at mortgage rates.
- ✚ If we purchase the land and let him live on it, for the next 15 or so years we have a caretaker on the property and will take very good care of land.
- ✚ Dan H. has a good relationship with us. He is a family man. His wife is deceased and his daughter lives in Alaska.

Mike Fenn has permission to negotiate with Dan Habermehl, but he will bring back any proposals to the Board for approval.

Meeting ended with prayer.

Next meetings:

September 16-18, 2022

October 28-30, 2022