

Mt. Irenaeus

Board of Trustees Meeting

September 17, 2022

Minutes

Present:	Paul Aroune	Excused:	Terri Marrie
	Rob Buckla		Kate Trosch
	Kathy Colucci (Zoom)		
	Matrecia James		
	Dianne Kuzia Hills		
	Jackie Lanzillo (Zoom)		
	Greg Licamele		
	Mike New		
	Otto Rothermel		
	Sarino Tropeano		
	Mike Fenn		
	Mary Giardini		
	Joe Kotula, ofm		
	Kevin Kriso, ofm		
	Michelle Marcellin		
	Lou McCormick, ofm		
	Karen Pulaski		
	Dan Riley, ofm		

Meeting began at 9 am with prayer and review of the Friday night discussions.
Dan Riley read excerpts from his book "Franciscan Lectio..." and had short discussion.

In July a group from the Mountain (Dan Riley, Kevin Kriso, Joe Kotula, Mike Fenn, Karen Pulaski, Joel Serra) went to the Center for Action and Contemplation to meet with Richard Rohr, ofm and some of his staff. The group talked about the significance of this trip for the Mountain:

- Richard Rohr talked about the 5 stages – known as the Wisdom Pattern - for an organization. Kevin thinks that it makes an organization more internally focused. "The 5 M's" – HuMan, Movement, Machine, Monument, Memory.
- Karen shared that this experience brought her back to the 80's and the feeling she had when the Mountain was beginning: that this is so needed and what is ours to do – create concrete action, create a place that can help others
- Dan stated that listening to Rohr was powerful. The CAC is still Rohr centered, but he thinks the Mountain is not. The Mountain is about faces and not one person. The "we" is here, not just the "me." It is a group dynamic working to sustain the movement.

Other comments:

- Dan's desire to have the book to create the space for dialog and going beyond to other circles is critical to our mission here. Also, there is another facet to this book – it can be leveraged in many ways. There is a page with the Mountain information on it – that will bring people to the Mountain and not just the book.

- ✚ The Mountain was founded by more than just one man – the Allegany Ritiro Sisters were a large part of our beginning. The feminine comes alive in us.
- ✚ It is obvious that we are a team member community. We have a higher, overarching role of teacher – what we do here and how we look at life and take it out to the world.
- ✚ We need to (and do) focus on the vision and not the outcome. We breathe new life into the movement – teach others to carry it on. By continuing this, the culture will be sustainable. Monuments are reflections and we want a forward looking vision.

Karen told more about the actual trip to CAC:

- ✚ They had a little over 2 hours with Richard Rohr, which was amazing because of his poor health. His chemistry with Dan was palpable. He kept reiterating that we do not need massive numbers for our process to exist – we need 2-5 “movers” and everyone else can be part-time. He told them to keep doing what we are doing, don’t slow down. Richard asked a lot about our intentional community. Karen walked away hopeful. We are evolving here.
- ✚ Richard shared his own thoughts about professional vs. movement intention. Richard said it is ok to have machine people as long as there are 2-3 movement people.

Comments:

- ✚ The Mountain core community is the movement and the people we are bringing into our life. We need to make sure these people are willing to immerse themselves in this life.
- ✚ The CAC considers themselves a professional non-profit in support of a Christian contemporary movement. They have over 500,000 people in the database. They hired talent to feed the machine and they have a challenge.
- ✚ The Mountain feels like we should lead with the Franciscan movement and then talk about the machine.
- ✚ There is conversatio happening at the Mountain. All of us have the energy and are part of the movement. The larger part of culture says either-or but we are not. Difference here means trust, but in other places it means separate. Not one thing here is more important than the other. There is not one organization that we are trying to be like, but we can learn from them and share the way we are.
- ✚ Question: Do we have what we need in place to manage and perpetuate our part of the organization aspects? Mike is not sure, that is part of why we are trying to hire the new positions that were approved at the last Board meeting.
- ✚ We need the business side to be parallel with the movement side, one cannot be ahead of the other.
- ✚ This meeting is not a meeting – we are “conducting” the meeting with intention. This is conversatio.
- ✚ This is a learning organization – we are not rigid.

Paul Aroune reported about the Franciscan Federation Conference. The group from the Mountain who attended the conference were: Mike Fenn, Karen Pulaski, Claire Fisher, Dan Riley, Joe Kotula, Kevin Kriso and Paul Aroune.

Paul shared that every break out conversation was about bringing youth to the Federation, which is something we are already doing. The Mountain is a model that is living a contemplative life, not just talking about it. People were very excited to hear about our community. We are doing what Francis did and in such a deep way. Paul said it was nice to share what we do here and see the excitement of others when they heard about us. They wanted to hear more. Paul thought it was a great experience. He told us that there were a couple hundred people with about 90% of them being professed women.

Karen added that there was a huge focus on youth, but also on opening the circle to bring in lay people. Karen shared that she sometimes feels isolated from her personal life because they do not really know what she is doing at the










Mountain. At the Federation Conference there were so many who are living a life like hers and she really had a sense of community and felt embraced in that community.

Mike Fenn informed us that the Mountain is going to join the Federation, but they are trying to figure out new membership lines. Mike was asked to be on a committee about intentional living. He encouraged the Committee to visit the Mountain, maybe in the spring.


Dan felt that was one reason they went to the Conference - to see that we are NOT ALONE. "We landed on a planet where everyone is like us!"

Br. Joe shared that he has a hard time with growth, does not feel it is necessarily a good thing. He feels very pessimistic. He finds it almost impossible to grow. Joe was overwhelmed by the amount of "active things" that are planned for the Mountain. He likes to do one thing at a time, feels overwhelmed at times.

An active discussion progressed with many comments:

-  Joe, your voice is grounding for us. Our culture here is strong and there is always a fear when there is any kind of growth. We have a powerful, strong culture and that's wind beneath our wings and it helps us to look at the growth.
-  Franciscan leadership is a bike – one wheel is successioning. We are all on the bike seat. The other wheel is tradition, purposeful according to tradition.
-  There is still a place for everybody. The Mountain has a responsibility to grow if we are expecting to continue.
-  Dan felt that everyone's insights are so timely and he gets scared about the future too. This is the first time in a long time that he has been at a board meeting that he has felt secure.
-  We listened and we are present. Joe is a barometer. This is a safe space. We are always grounding ourselves. This doesn't happen in other places.
-  We are learning and growing every time we come here. We are going in a great direction and it is because we are doing conversatio. We cannot grow without talking.
-  It is important that we took the time to talk about this topic.
-  What is amazing is that this is not a Board of Catholics. There is a history with roots that go back to our founding.
-  Our Franciscan Values are more "human values." They are a litmus test to see if a person is right for the key community.

News from the new Province – Kevin:

-  In July the new Province put together a new Synod of younger friars (under 65) (couple hundred guys) to discuss what the new Province in the US is going to look like in the future. They do not want it to be a merger of 6 different entities. Yes they have to merge and do business, but how do they revitalize their witness to American society. What does American society need?
 - How do you bring Fraternity into society – not community but fraternity.
 - How are we going to know leaders? Decentralized – the Guardians are going to have to take on a larger role.
 - What kind of ideas do the different groups want to bring forward? Will they be able to make different proposals on how to live? On what their mission will take on?

✚ Kevin's idea is "mission for the transformation of hearts." He feels like that's OUR mission. How do we transform it into prayer and watch out for ego, fear, etc.?

✚ Kevin is hoping more people in the Franciscan world would see it and want to come here.

✚ The Big 6 asked all the communities to come up with proposals. Kevin will be working on that proposal. Mike Fenn stated that we are looking for other movement people. He asked Kevin if he got the sense that others were interested in what we have here? Kevin thought that all the friars seemed to be movement people and wanted to revitalize our witness to American society. The itinerant fraternity that is on the road needs a place to come and reflect on their journey – Kevin offered the Mountain. Kevin feels you have to have the contemplative piece to reflect on your journey. The Order is saying that we are a contemplative fraternity in mission – so the Order has a commission on fraternities and a commission on mission, but nothing about the contemplative part.

Dan asked how we can help them understand that contemplation is a huge part of the process. Kevin is making efforts on this front. He is bringing a committee here of at least 4 people at the beginning of October. They will be talking about the kind of retreats that will be offered and he is going to suggest the Mountain to keep the Franciscan element.

Broke for Executive session and lunch.

Strategic Plan Initiatives:

#1 – Reach out to worldwide and US Franciscan leadership.

✚ Went to Franciscan Federation Conference.

✚ Meeting with Richard Rohr and the Center for Contemplation and Action in New Mexico.

✚ Kevin went to Kansas City for a Guardians meeting. Met with Keith Warner and they spoke at length on what is happening at the Mountain. Keith was excited about it and Kevin is going to connect with him again.

#2 – Seek others and develop a diverse community.

✚ Jimmy Kernan was a summer companion at the Mountain. He was in San Francisco at a soup kitchen and now is in Chicago studying at the Catholic Theological Union. Mike Fenn stated he has never met a friar so committed and has a passion to be with us. He is going to get a PhD in Chicago and asked Mike and the friars if they thought about having a friar here who would also be a teacher at SBU.

✚ Mike asked Jimmy to come onto our Board. Jimmy is going to bring it to his formation leader. He is very interested in being on the Board.

✚ Karen said that Jimmy was phenomenal here this summer and just "got it."

There was a discussion on bringing people onto the Board:

✚ We need to be intentional on who to bring on the Board.

✚ There was a committee – Kevin Cleary was spearheading it – now Rob and Kathy are working with Mike.

✚ Currently we have 13 people on board and 12 is the minimum.

- Mike New things that we need to think about our maximum of 24 people, it might be too many.
- Many of the current Board are coming to the end of their terms.
- It would be good to get the numbers up a bit because we have a lot of work coming up and not a lot of hands to accomplish the tasks.
- The same people are being asked to do a lot of the work and that can burn them out, we need more hands.

✚ The following have been invited to attend the next Board meeting: Meg Lush, Perry Wheeler, and Jimmy Kernan.

✚ Jeff Gingerich has accepted to come onto our Board. He will be at the October meeting.

#3 – Co-ministry with SBU.

- ✚ We had 14 student – incoming freshmen – stay at the Mountain for 4 nights. They rotated between working at the Warming House, working with Bona Responds and helping here at the Mountain. We shared the evenings and reflections. Weeks later we are still building connections with them. Matrecia wants to do this again next year and perhaps have a service day within the semester also.
- ✚ Alice Miller Nation usually takes students to the St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia each semester. She asked Karen and Evelyn Penman if they would take 5 students this fall over break.
- ✚ A Health Professionals retreat is scheduled for October 6th. They were looking for a workshop type of experience, but Kevin is talking with them about what we can offer at the Mountain. As an occupational therapist, Karen is also forming ties with the DePerro School.
- ✚ Ann-Claire Fisher and Kevin are speaking with Katie O’Brien about starting conversations circles such as the Racial Injustice Discussion group the Mountain sponsored.
- ✚ We are in the embryonic stages of the search for a new Minister and Associate Director. Have three applications for the ministry job. Have spoken with some of them.
- ✚ Have had discussions on connecting with students better – starting the Mountain Community Leaders again. Students have good ideas on how to utilize other friend groups. We would like to find students with strong leadership ability and not those who will just follow others.
- ✚ We have hired a student to drive others from campus to the Mountain on Sunday’s for Mass. He is a good fit, his name is Jackson Wurtz and he came up last year with others.
- ✚ Had a good day retreat with the new SBU President, Jeff Gingerich and his wife Betsy. They filled their day with a lot of activities and said that is was the most relaxing day they have had since arriving at SBU. Jeff was asked to join our Board and he declined that day, but then came back a couple weeks later and agreed. He will start at our October meeting.
- ✚ The SBU Board is coming to the Mountain before their Board meeting in September. There are 26 people who want to come up, that is practically their whole Board. We are going to give them a true student experience. Dan said that the last time they came to the Mountain they had a revolutionary time, very important.
- ✚ Dave Hilmey, the Dean of the School of Arts, is interested in getting involved as well as his wife who is an architect. Dave and Fr. Dan have discussed getting the Peace Studies Program at SBU started again. Peace studies was an anti-war program.
- ✚ Trying to meet with SBU on our current agreements in place. We noted that prior to the loss of Dennis, we were part of the process. Right now they are outside the bounds of our agreements. Will attempt to talk with Jeff Gingerich on the agreements and explain what our relationship is all about, we are not just a vendor.

Comments/questions:

- SBU recently appointment interim University Chaplain and Vice President of Franciscan Mission. They tell us to wait until there are permanent persons in these positions to discuss issues. We brought up the need to sit together and discuss how we work together. We have been doing tasks, but not discussing how we work together – friars and lay staff together. There is some unhappiness with how the offices are assigned in the Ministry building. We want to say where we want to be, not ask where they want us.
- It was asked how far behind SBU is in their money to the Mountain: Last year they allocated \$90K. The agreement calls for \$124K, with a minimum of \$110K, It has been 3 years since we received the minimum.
- Dan and Mike discussed the relationship with SBU Advancement and Bob Van Wicklin. There were more ambitious plans to work together than what have taken place. We requested written agreements which was declined. There were to be joint meetings with benefactors and discuss funding of the Mountain and the University together. The SBU board then told Bob they needed to focus solely on the Health professions center. A year later we had one meeting with a major benefactor, but joint follow ups did not take place.

- If SBU speaks to benefactors about funding the Mountain, that money goes into the SBU Community Endowment for Mt. Irenaeus. We do not get the money directly.
- We need to summarize this and report to Jeff Gingerich.

#4 – Expand the footprint of the Mountain beyond the Mountain.

- ✚ See report given before meeting.

#5 – Design and develop a physical master plan.

- ✚ We are forming a new committee to begin this process. We hope to have the first meeting in October. This group will envision what new places would be like, get price tags and prioritize.
- ✚ They will not get caught up in the tasks only, they will sit down with the “big map” of the Mountain and figure out literal placement of new areas/buildings.
- ✚ This is a “design group” not buildings and grounds – they need to envision what the Mountain will physically look like and how to accomplish our needs.
- ✚ We are loaded to do this, we just need the right people on the committee.
- ✚ To go to benefactors we need a concrete plan so they feel confident funding any project. We need visuals and tangibles.
- ✚ This committee will work with all the other groups of the Mountain so they know what the future needs are for the Mountain.

#6 – Create a comprehensive advancement plan.

- ✚ See report given before meeting.

Other comments/questions:

- ✚ The Advancement Director position – we received 2 or 3 applicants. Out of those maybe 1-2 are a possibility.
- ✚ Mike stated that if we can find an Associate Director that could take over some of his responsibilities then he could to the advancement work.
- ✚ We have received 7 applications for the Associate Director position.
- ✚ Would we later find someone for the Advancement position or does Mike stay in that position?
- ✚ Everyone we hire needs to know our life, live the ministry. Mike lives the life here, we might never find someone who is at his level.
- ✚ We need to have people who will live with us. If we hire 3 more people, then 50% will be living off site. This place is countering the culture like. The new people need to learn quickly.
- ✚ We need to make sure we have enough people on our “bench” for our needs. We have competent people, we need to make sure we have enough people.
- ✚ We are a learning community. Dan knows the people, the stories. He shares them with Mike and they go out together to make the connections. The Associate Director will learn from Mike, and so on... We are broadening the understanding of the job and the place.
- ✚ Dan has the corporate memory of relationships with people. We need to share these memories before Dan is not here to share them with us. The Mountain is vulnerable if we lose him so we need to broaden the responsibility to others.




Decision discussed:

Fill the position of the Associate Director first, that can free Mike up to the development/advancement and relationship connections with Dan. See how this progresses and then, if needed, look to fill the Advancement Director position. This will give us more time to find the right person for the Advancement position.

It was suggested to increase the committee – Rob suggested some names: Kevin Van Norstrand, Pat Doyle and Dan McCarthy.

Other committee reports –

It was asked if the solar project is complete and funded.

-  Yes, we received \$100K to use and the project came in around \$60K.
-  We have no battery backup yet. We need the meter set up and RG&E is behind in billing. We have not seen an accurate billing for about 3-4 months. The credits are not showing on the billing yet. Liberty Solar is behind schedule on this and other areas.
-  Mike has had meetings with Dean Stanfield from Liberty Solar about the battery backup. Br. Joe has talked to other persons who have knowledge about this and they say the technology is not there yet for the batteries. We may have to wait on this aspect.

Jackie reminded the Board about the Auction dates for this year. The On Line Auction will be November 4-13. Please do what you can to support the event. To date the Auctions have raised over \$600K for the Mountain.

Meeting adjourned.

Dates for next Board meetings:

October 28-30, 2022

February 3-5, 2023 (Zoom)

April 21-23, 2023