

Mt. Irenaeus
Board of Trustees meeting
October 29, 2022
Minutes

Present:	Paul Aroune Rob Buckla Kathy Colucci Jeff Gingerich Dianne Kuzia Hills Jackie Lanzillo Greg Licamele Terri Marrie Mike New Otto Rothermel Sarino Tropeano Kate Trosch Meg Camire Mike Fenn Mary Giardini Jim Kernan, ofm Joe Kotula, ofm Kevin Kriso, ofm Michelle Marcellin Lou McCormick, ofm Karen Pulaski Dan Riley, ofm	Excused:	Matrechia James
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Began meeting with prayer.

Life and Ministry at Mountain from Core Community:

- ✚ Mike Fenn told us that there is a breakthrough with the Franciscan Federation. Some friars have not wanted to work with us, but this US-6 merger is a brand new Province, now people are starting to be interested in what we are doing.
- ✚ Gave update on the “Franciscan merger” of the Provinces. It is a renewal of a new Province. The new provinces are asking what the friars/communities would like to do, how do they want to renew?
- ✚ We have been doing the same thing at the Mountain – asking what people need and what fits along with our life here.
- ✚ Kevin shared a report of the US-6 friars; words used were “contemplative,” “fraternity,” “mission.” The same aspects the Mountain believes are important.
- ✚ Dan Riley is gathering people to help plan a way to perhaps restore (or partially restore) the Robert Lax Cottage as a site on the Mountain for safe discussions of “civil discourse.”
- ✚ We are making connections with intentional mixed communities; Franciscan Federation, Center for Action and Contemplation are two examples.

Broke into discussion groups.

Thoughts from the groups:

- ✦ Contemplation leads to justice. When we see the larger picture we can see what is wrong.
- ✦ Conversatio is not a discussion or conversation – it is looking at the whole picture. Not just talking about ideas, but making a change.
- ✦ The overall call to rebuild is strong.
- ✦ We have been here a while and what we built is incredibly special and we have kept the mission alive. It shows we are moving to another phase, but we are keeping true to the Mountain.
- ✦ People are starting to pay attention. This is the “slow work of God.” We keep on going on. We were in a panicked space before, but we are not anymore. There is a sense of excitement and movement.
- ✦ There are people/groups we have connections to who are doing these things in other areas – would they be willing to come to us and let us co-mission with them? Where do we have experts that are right next to us with whom we could collaborate? How do we rally around synergies?

Review of Strategic Plan Initiatives –

Dan Riley:

- ✦ Are what we looking for what we want to pass on?
- ✦ We are humble servants in an ancient tradition.
- ✦ Contemplation remains open, it never ends.
- ✦ Our interest is not just feeding the poor, but living with them and helping them.

Karen Pulaski:

- ✦ Living in community has been an incredible experience.
- ✦ She invites people to take a week here to immerse themselves into this life.

Kevin Kriso:

- ✦ Contemplative - fraternity - mission. God is in this and part of any decision we have to make.
- ✦ Fraternal does not just mean men, it is everyone and it helps us to get rid of the rough edges and lets us be brothers and sisters.
- ✦ Interprovincial retreat committee have met at the Mountain before and they were mostly lectures. Larry Ford, ofm said they need more contemplative components to it. “Amazing things can get done if people don’t care who gets the credit.”
- ✦ The young alumni retreat will be coming up here for retreat for a few days.
- ✦ The Mountain Community Leaders group is coming back, they are super busy, but with great ideas.
- ✦ We have had some really good experiences with the students being here, just living the life. There have been new people coming up for Sunday Mass and brunch.

Lou McCormick:

- ✦ It has been very helpful to have Karen join the community because Lou cannot do all that he used to do in hospitality.
- ✦ The housekeeping is shared in a lot of ways. Lou does less directing than ever.
- ✦ Lou considers himself “retired,” but will still do chores. He does not want more.

- ✚ Lou holds the title of Coordinator of Hospitality, but he cannot do all the work anymore. When Karen leaves, he will not be able to pick it all back up. He needs to share that with everyone now.
- ✚ When you have done a good job, you are not afraid to leave it because it is in good hands.

Joe Kotula:

- ✚ Joe spoke about the expansion of our community and how it grows. It has its challenges. Karen joining the community has been wonderful. Every time a person joins, it is a new experience, especially when someone lives here.
- ✚ Joe spoke about the combining of the Provinces. The friars have an expectation that they will come here for a week or so and be a part of life, a real integration of our life.
- ✚ Lou might be retired, but we call him out because he has so much wisdom.
- ✚ Joe is the liaison for the Weekends and More Branch. He is not the leader and does not need to be one. As liaison he brings what the friars and community talk about to the group and they decide how to make it happen.

Dan Riley:

- ✚ Dan reviewed and updated information on the upcoming Mountain on the Road events. He will use excerpts from his book as part of the discussions.
- ✚ Attempts to co-mission with SBU are still being formed. Very excited about the prospects.

Jeff Gingerich stated that there have been two important events this semester:

1. Brought the SBU Board of Trustees to the Mountain. A number of the Trustees commented on how important that was in helping them think of mission and our connection.
2. Meeting with the Seneca Nation about tradition and talking about what land means here. Franciscan spirituality and Seneca spirituality are very connected and he would like that to grow.

Strategic Initiatives and updates:

Initiative #1 –

- ✚ Dan's book is helping to make connections. Book tours are ongoing through the rest of the year and into January.
- ✚ Kevin write a significant letter to the US-6 leadership and it was well received.
- ✚ Mike Fenn has been asked to be part of the leadership involved with emerging intentional communities across the Franciscan U.S. community. On March 23rd the leadership is gathering at the Mountain. The Franciscan Federation says there are people across the Country who are looking to live in a Franciscan Intentional Community. That is what we are doing here. During the gathering the Mountain community will invite them into our life to experience it firsthand. We went out to the world and they are now looking at us. We do what we do and they are interested!

Initiative #2 –

- ✚ We have a young man who is interested in becoming a Companion for a period of time. We are continuing conversations with him that have thus far been good. He is going to come to the Mountain for a week.
- ✚ Karen Pulaski told us that at first the questions were general, but now they are becoming more concrete, such as: What did you do with your dog, house, financials, etc.?
- ✚ We have great momentum going right now. Karen will be gone before we know it, so we have to keep up the momentum. Discernment is critical and we need to follow the process.

Initiative #3 –

- ✚ Karen took students to St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia over the Fall break.
 - Took a very small group due to safety (Covid).
 - It was a wonderful experience.
 - Kept it “Mountain-esque” and planned out for the evenings with contemplation. The students took it extremely seriously.
 - Not just performing service during the day, but also time at night together.
- ✚ The Board has recognized a need for a full time minister to work along with us. Four candidates have emerged from initial screening process and will be brought through interview panels.

Question asked: Is there a thought process of only focusing on students during SBU time and not after they graduate?

- ✚ Alumni are seen as mostly for fundraising for universities, but the area of alumni are a growth prospect with us now.
- ✚ The “Mountain on the Road” and “Mountain in Your Home” events are an ongoing spirituality experience for alums. It is happening, but not boldly stated.
- ✚ It is part of their ongoing life and we are not sure universities are looking at that aspect. It is not in their documents to do this, but we are working on it together. SBU and the Mountain have a responsibility to reach out to others and see where they want to go.
- ✚ Meg Camire believes there is a group of people out there who are interested, but are not reached.
- ✚ Rob Buckla talked about the “80’s weekend” events that started 11 years ago. People were showing up for a basketball game, but they also wanted a spiritual connection. Began coming to the Mountain the Sunday of that weekend. What started out as a fundraiser for the SBU Athletic Fund has now become a much more important event.
- ✚ Dan Riley has been talking with friars on campus who have connections with alums and they all act independently. How do we regularize these meetings when a friar moves on or dies? How do we hold on to it? How do we keep it in the language of the document going forward?
- ✚ People want a spiritual experience. These events have changed people’s lives. Alums are hungry for relationships and spirituality. They are disillusioned with the Church.
- ✚ Karen Pulaski stated that the yearning and hunger is not just SBU – we have a LOT of people who come to the Mountain who are not SBU alum and are searching for this spiritual connection.
- ✚ Greg Licamele is looking at our digital ministry. How can we use that to reach people?
- ✚ Matrechia James is helping us segment our audiences – be more intentional with our messaging and outreach.

Initiative #4 –

- ✚ Progress is lagging by design because we need to know where the other people are going with their strategies so we can support them.

Initiative #5 –

- ✚ Initial Design and Development Team met last week, with Mike Sullivan facilitating. Plans to meet regularly, still defining overall objectives and workflows.
- ✚ The Design and Development Committee is being created to help envision the future of the Mountain and share that vision with others.

Initiative #6 – No update at this time.

Mike New - Personnel Committee update:

- ✚ We have 3 positions that we are looking to hire:
 - Associate Director
 - Ministry Coordinator
 - Advancement Director
- ✚ Following our process, we have spoken to some of the candidates.
 - Associate Director:
 - Had quite a few responses – not as far along – made some calls.
 - Have spoken to some candidates, not ready to move forward to next step.
 - There are still 3 more to interview.
 - Have one person who applied for Advancement Director, but he is more in line with the Associate Director.
 - Ministry Coordinator:
 - Have 3 good candidates.
 - Will have 2 groups of 4 persons each perform interviews.
 - Screening committee is: Mike Fenn, Mike New, Karen Pulaski, Kevin Kriso.
 - Requirement for candidates to spend some time here – minimum of 3 days.
 - Final decision will be made up of the core community with some Trustees.
 - Advancement Director:
 - We have done a lot of recruiting, but not any candidates yet.

Discussion/Comments:

- ✚ A lot of these positions overlap. We need to organically look at people who already work for us who have not been able to grow and who need to look at doing more. Leave room for people to grow.
- ✚ Candidates should come to the Mountain for more than 3 days. They need to really experience the life.
- ✚ Is there an expectation or openness that people live here? Answer: It is not a requirement, but we are open to it happening.
- ✚ Candidates need to really know that the heart of our service is stacking wood, cleaning cabinets, etc. – not just prayer and hospitality.
- ✚ For the Advancement Director, we may want to look at someone at the end of their career who is looking at a different lifestyle. We should not rule anyone out, but look for someone at the end of their career or even in sales.
- ✚ Mike Fenn might be willing to move into the Advancement role.
- ✚ These positions are critical. With Mike Fenn freed up with the other positions coming on, he may be able to do at least some of the Advancement work.
- ✚ The maturing of what we need now is different than 15 years ago- great story telling is critical and takes a while to develop. What we really need is 2 skill sets – assertive in getting appointments set up and someone who is a strategist. We have the ability to tell a story here – we do not need to convince people of our sustainability, people would be excited if given the story.
- ✚ We need to get clarity around SBU's campaign, especially if we are looking for an Advancement person. We don't want to talk past each other.

- ✚ Mike Fenn is meeting with Bob Van Wicklin about what is happening with their phase.
- ✚ With the endowment at SBU for the Mountain, we do not see the money for years. We get a yearly draw from the endowment.
- ✚ Our strategic plan is roughly a year old and it has not been shared publicly. We need to do that because it will attract candidates and people who want to work with us and volunteer.
- ✚ Our benefactors need to be collaborators. We need to get in front of them. We need to get doing it now.

Katie Trosch – Finance Committee update:

- ✚ Katie went over the report given before the meeting. Additions/comments:
 - Martin Shields and Martha Kopcienski have been added to the Committee.
 - Looking for more to join the Committee especially since Katie is nearing the end of her time on the Board. Suggestion of asking Matrecia James about adding people she knows.
 - Because our investments are through Holy Name Province it was asked if our investments will be impacted because of the Provincial merger. Mike and Katie will find out.
 - It is significant that we have no debt.
 - One of the things we need to look at is how much cash we should we have on hand. How much liquidity. The Committee will be looking at this and make recommendations.

Greg Licamele - Communications Committee update:

- ✚ The Committee is in several “circles” with others: Dan Riley and podcasts; Mary G. with communications out to our friends and benefactors; advertising and announcements for the Auction; work with the Council for Spirit and Life.
- ✚ Claire Fisher is now working with the Committee as the intern. It is good to have her student perspective with communications.
- ✚ We try to intentionally use evangelization with our communications, such as with our solar field and its connection to the environment.
- ✚ Kevin Kriso asked if the work with the US-6 could be folded into one of the Communications Committee areas.
- ✚ There are some people who are interested in broadcasting and we could have a multimedia ministry going out from here.
- ✚ The Committee has learned as they have expanded and grown.

Sarino Tropeano - Buildings and Grounds update:

- ✚ Since putting in the solar field our utility bills have a negative balance.
- ✚ Still looking into having battery backup for the Mountain. Jimmy Kernan is very interested in this topic and wants to make sure we do not buy too soon, the cost is still very high for these systems. He offered to keep track and let us know any information he finds. Dianne Kuzia Hills asked if we should be looking into converting some of our vehicles into electric vehicles.
- ✚ Richard Bump, a local carpenter from Cuba, has put a roof on St. Joes and also put a roof over the door at the back of the House of Peace. The garage probably needs a new roof. The Other House will be due soon and the House of Peace at some time. Nothing but the garage is critical.
- ✚ Living Stones plaques added. Jim Plukas did the frames and helped put them up. He also did the milling of 1700 square feet of (cherry tree) wood and its seasoning.
- ✚ Buildings and Grounds is here to help with the day to day needs and will do leg work for the Design and Development Committee, but they do not help come up with ideas.

- ✚ Br. Joe let us know that student involvement has been very important. They helped with the cherry tree, dragged the tree tops out and cut and stacked wood for the fire.
- ✚ Design and Development Committee talked about Habermehl property. We got a 3rd party appraisal of \$95K. The Committee wants to offer \$95K and let him live on it for a time.
 - Sarino suggests getting a full proposal and bring back to the Board.
 - Mary Giardini reminded everyone that Mike Fenn already received permission to negotiate and just has to bring back a proposal to the Board for approval.
- ✚ We have another neighbor, Lorraine, who wants to sell to us. It is a very nice space. If we have the property it gives us flexibility to use as we need – perhaps use it to swap with the people across the road. Lorraine is thinking \$160K and we think that would be the appraised price and it is worth it. She wants to know by April or she puts it on the market in the summer. There are 2 separate residences on the property – 2 wells, 2 septic, 2 driveways, etc.

Motion: By Terri Marrie – To empower Mike Fenn to enter into negotiations for that property. Second by Sarino Tropeano. All in favor.

Br. Joe asked about the fact that when the friars become one Province, the Province will be holding on to the legal entity of Holy Name Province, what will happen if we default? The Mountain would go back to HNP, but that is under the US-6. We have until October to figure it out.

Otto believes with these changes we may need to revise our By-Laws.

Karen Pulaski - Council for Spirit and Life:

Weekends and More –

- ✚ Don Smith and Martha Kopcienski are Conveners of this Branch.
- ✚ During COVID this group really excelled.
- ✚ Had robust Evenings of Re-Creation during the summer. Had teams of persons who planning and executed the evenings.
- ✚ Have had Racial Justice groups come up to meet and discuss. They start each meeting with prayer and Lectio.

Initiation and Education –

- ✚ Karen Pulaski and Terri Marrie are Conveners of this Branch.
- ✚ Kathy Colucci has joined this Branch.
- ✚ Wrote a draft of the Summer Companion handbook.
- ✚ Work has begun on a master piece of resource for those who come to us with no knowledge of religion at all, to those who know more.

Electronic Media –

- ✚ Currently need to find Convener(s) for this Branch

Mountain in Your Home – (this includes Mountain on the Road, Sojourners and Young Alumnae groups)

- ✚ John Scharlock, Kathy and Steve Gilmore, Ian McBride, Lily Whelan and Mike Camoin are Conveners of this Branch.
- ✚ Currently reimagining this group to see what it could look like and how to move forward.
- ✚ Mike Camoin leads the Sojourners group that would like to join in this Branch. Fr. Dan has been on some of these calls and they are a very interesting group.

- ✚ The Young Alum group (led by Ian McBride and Lilly Whelan) have had Advent and Lenten prayer Zooms. Not a large number of people attend, but it is a very rich time.
- ✚ For Mountain in on Road events, need to evaluate. Joe Flanagan has retired from Bona's and he was the person who drove these events. With him gone the cost will probably be put on the Mountain. These are definitely a way to draw people in to the Mountain. It is an important outreach to alums. It took many years to get these events set and attended, we do not want to lose that connection.

Jackie Lanzillo - Advancement Committee Update:

- ✚ Members of the Committee are: Jim Boyle, Kathy Colucci, Rob Buckla, Marv Stocker and Jackie Lanzillo.
- ✚ Jackie went over the Advancement report submitted before the meeting.
- ✚ Auction is coming up. Please promote as much as possible. We connect to a lot of alumni and this brings awareness of the Mountain and our message.

Mike Fenn - Nominating/Board Development:

- ✚ In the next couple years we are losing a lot of members. Kevin Cleary was helping us recruit for the Board, but he has been off the Board for a year now. This responsibility falls under the Vice-Chair in our By-Laws.
- ✚ Kathy Colucci has been helping with names for recruiting.
- ✚ We have a fairly large list of persons to consider.
- ✚ Also noted that if a member rolls off the Board they need to be off for one year and then can come back if they wish. But also, they can still be on Committees if they wish.
- ✚ We need to fill out our Committees more and even have more students on the Committees. When the Mountain began, the students were the same number as older adults on the Committees. We were cautious of students having a liability and that is why they were not on the Board.
- ✚ Need to be aware of how far a member has to travel and if they would be able to make all the meetings.

Kathy Colucci asked Jeff Gingerich what he thought of the day since this is his first meeting. Jeff responded:

- ✚ It is reaffirming to be here in this group.
- ✚ It helped him think about our relationship with the University, our overlapping and integrating strategic plans.
- ✚ We need to re-look at the agreement between the two entities. This could help us sort out questions that arose today.
- ✚ The Mountain is a valuable part of SBU and their identity.
- ✚ He feels blessed to be part of the group.

Greg Licamele asked if we should look at the timing of the end of term. Right now it is at the October meeting. Should it be the April meeting so they are there for the full semester? Again, should Otto look again at updating the By-Laws?

Mike Fenn – Assisi Pilgrimage:

- ✚ Have confirmed dates with John Cella (Pilgrimage office) for October 24 – November 4, 2023. The pilgrimage will go to Assisi, Greccio, LaVerna, and Rome.

- ✚ We have a list of people who made a commitment in 2020 – please contact Mike if you are still interested.
- ✚ We can take 24-26.
- ✚ Sr. Margaret Carney will be one of our guides. She is great over there, a very interesting guide.
- ✚ We want to keep the numbers on the low side so that we are sensitive to the intimacy of it.

Mike New closed the meeting with a prayer.

Next Board meetings:

February 3-4, 2023 – Zoom

April 21-22, 2023 – at Mountain