

Mt. Irenaeus
Board Meeting
Minutes
November 9, 2024







Present: Kathy Colucci
Tom Conway, ofm
Matt Delforte
Kathy Dougherty
Matrecia James
Jackie Lanzillo
Evan McElroy
Richard Rothermel
Mike Sullivan
Sarino Tropeano
Kate Trosch

Rob Buckla
Mike Fenn
Mary Giardini
Martha Kopcienski
Kevin Kriso, ofm
Greg Licamele
Michelle Marcellin
Lou McCormick, ofm
Bill McIntyre, ofm
Natalie Pronio
Karen Pulaski
Mari Snyder

Began with prayer and introductions.

Discussion on the events of Friday night and thoughts on our manner of life and ministry going forward.

Events at the Mountain and in the Valley:

-  Natalie reported on the busy schedule at the Mountain. Have had over 300 students come for events since August.
-  Have had groups up that have not been up for 15 years.
-  Students are connecting with Natalie in her role, both on campus and at the Mountain. This is an example of living the mission of the Mountain.
-  Have two communications interns working on Instagram, website, enewsletter.
-  New groups that have come to the Mountain: Step Troup, Black Student Union, LASO, Her Campus and Power Yoga Club.
-  Fr. Bill has developed a presence on campus and participated in the recent SIMM trip.

- 📅 Karen participated in a 2-day event at Siena for the Ecology Symposium and the Franciscan Action Network Youth Conference. Karen has been asked by FAN to be involved in the planning for next year.
- 📅 Karen making connections and collaborating with students and SBU on sustainability issues.
- 📅 Karen is participating in the Justice Circle which has 22 members and began a couple years ago. Karen will forward a report.
- 📅 Kevin has encouraged the Province to use the Mountain in their vocation process. There are 27 students in formation at the present time. 7 of those students have spent significant time at the Mountain.
- 📅 Making the transition to electric stoves.
- 📅 Kevin is taking a short sabbatical from mid-January to mid-March. He is concentrating on Franciscan contemplation and how we can learn and teach this as part of the mission of the Mountain. He is doing this at the Franciscan Retreat Center in Malibu, which is a resource in the Franciscan world.
- 📅 Kevin has continued to go through Dan Riley's property and has found wonderful information that could be a memoir or book about the Mountain.
- 📅 Karen is now leading Adult Formation:
 - Have had 70 people participating the last 14 months.
 - Starting another session in April.
 - Had one adult women's overnight last semester, another planned for March. Very popular event, usually have a waiting list.
- 📅 Br. Joe doing Mountain the Homes and Mountain on the Road events fall semester and spring.
- 📅 Br. Joe going with BonaResponds to Tennessee during the Thanksgiving break.

Strategic Planning:

Mike Fenn reviewed strategic plan initiatives -

- 📅 Continue to build a strong relationship with Our Lady of Guadalupe Province.
 - Friars taking sabbatical at the Mountain.
 - Karen and Kevin are going to the SYNOD event in Kansas City in January.
 - Would be good to get testimonials from young friars who have stayed at the Mountain.
 - Looking for more ways to get the word out about Mt. Irenaeus.
 - Kevin sent a letter to Roger Lopez, ofm at the Province and reminded him that 1/3 of the men in formation have come through the Mountain so why are they not engaging us more?
- 📅 Develop a diverse community.
 - Continue to streamline the onboarding of Companions.
 - Where do we house more people?
 - What is the intention of this way of life?
- 📅 Co-ministry with SBU.
 - Because of COVID people are craving personal connection. Besides Kevin making connections on campus, we also have Natalie and Karen.
 - Would like to have a meeting with Alice Miller Nation on ideas for work together.
 - Discussed internship opportunities.

- 📅 Expand Mountain footprint.
 - Greg is looking at the best process and way of getting word out on media.
 - Who can go Podcasts now that Dan is gone? Kevin might be interested.
 - Using students to help in a more active way.
 - Continuing the “Mountain Happenings” page and Instagram posts.
- 📅 Comprehensive Advancement Plan.
 - Talked about contacting Tony Billoni about updating our plan since we have hit the 3-year milestone.
 - Busy with the new Endowment Campaign.
 - Being proactive about filling the spaces that Dan left.
 - Important to tell of our “Three Peaks” initiative.
 - Important to go out to people individually because the world is a busy place and there is a lot of information out each day - we need to make our case to people in person and hope they pass it on to others.
 - The new campaign needs to have a solid view of our vision to offer people.
 - Need to stress our future, not the past. We are going forward.
 - We learned very quickly – information travels through Bonas and the Mountain very quickly - get to influencers and those with their own circles very quickly.
 - Kevin – wants to keep the Cottage idea alive – especially since the election.

Finance Report by Kate Trosch and Martha Kopcienski.

- 📅 Continuing maximum endowment draw monthly.
- 📅 Money from SBU is falling to \$70,000/year.
- 📅 Budget to actuals through September 2024 were reviewed and were on target.
- 📅 Upcoming capital campaign: we will use unrestricted operating funds in reserve to pay for campaign expenses rather than take a fee percentage out of campaign monies collected.
- 📅 Investment portfolio at Merrill Lynch as of end of September 2024 was \$5.108M, total, comprised of the following accounts:
 - \$3.374M in Capital Campaign
 - \$1.387M in FDR Sustainability
 - \$347K in Building Fund
- 📅 The Mountain uses the same investment firm as OLG province. It filters out what the province does not want to invest in, and the Mountain further filters out fossil fuels and the defense industry.

Advancement Report.

- 📅 Jackie Lanzillo went over the report that is posted on the website.
- 📅 Auction going well.
- 📅 Having Living Stones event this year at the Mountain.
- 📅 Rob Buckla went over the new endowment campaign that he is directing.
 - Preparing material to be given during one-on-one meetings.
 - In the first stage right now, not public yet. Meetings are all one on one right now.
 - Campaign Framework:
 - People and program focused, limited number of capital projects.
 - Goals will be determined by the first few gifts.

- Can we double the current endowment?
- 8-person campaign cabinet – Kathy, Mike, Rob, volunteers
- Phase 2 volunteer leadership – focus on Mountain Challenge Major Gift Committee. We are in the “campaign quiet phase” or leadership phase – a lot of what we are doing right now we want to keep quiet – don’t announce until about 50-75%.
- Have a good level of enthusiasm and people volunteering to help.
- Will gather the Committee in Nov/Dec and then start soliciting gifts.
- Will invite everyone on the Board to make a campaign contribution as to their capacity.
- Gifts paid over 5 years. Also looking at estate plans. Working on exact details.
- Looking to find matching gifts.
- Mike Fenn stated that Rob’s professionalism and experience has been exceptional. His experience counts for a lot in the donor’s eyes.
- We are not ready to share the campaign priorities, but they can be tied to each one of the strategic initiatives.

Round Robin on Committees:

Land (Mike Fenn):

- Have had good conversations with Chris Premielewski. Discussions are easier when the siblings are not involved. Mike is continuing discussions with Chris P.
- We are looking at 18-19 acres across the way, Chris has major ownership and can do the deal.

Motion: By Mike Sullivan to give Mike Fenn the ability to continue negotiating with Chris for the 18-19 acres that Chris controls. Second by Kate Trosch. Unanimous pass by Board.

Buildings and Grounds (Sarino Tropeano):

- Martha K. is moving away from the Committee and Bill McIntyre is taking over her spot. Martha will stay until Juniper is complete.
- Sarino went over update on Juniper renovations.
- Fr. Bill is ordering stoves and a dishwasher for the House of Peace kitchen.
- Getting quotes on batteries for the solar field.
- We are still buying some power from RG&E (bills are much lower) but are reaching out for better reports from them about our usage.
- Big utility bills are propane and oil.
- Sarino expressed that we need more solar power, especially if we get Premielewski property. When we move fully away from propane and oil, we will be using more electricity, so now we need more solar.
- Juniper is 100% electricity now and newer appliances are more efficient.
- We have money in an endowment for building maintenance. The money from Giving Tuesday this year will be used for the kitchen renovations also.

Communications –

- Have 17 members on the Committee.

- Have updated some of the language on the website – removed Covid and just said if sick, stay home.
- Staff page updated. Other things moved and updated.
- Greg and Mike talked with Stephen Copeland a week ago – Stephen recorded 16-20 hours of conversation with Dan while driving to California last year. Stephen's intent will be (early 2025) to formulate a book on his traveling with this spiritual man. Some audio clips on our website. Audio very rich, very deep conversations.
- Stephen works for Franciscan Media, and he would like to integrate Dan's work. Stephen's book would be his own memoir, not Dan's. Possible another Franciscan Lectio in the future.
- How do we categorize Dan's work – 291 podcasts in chronological order. Showed the page he made about Advent with Fr. Dan; Christmas with Fr. Dan, etc. 12-15 years of content of Dan's work and words.
- Stephen is interested in digitizing all of Dan's writings so they can be used in some way in the future. Dan gave Stephen permission to use the information.
- Discussion about Dan's writings/art and how to go forward. Mike Fenn will talk with our legal team about keeping everything in order. Also, need to take into consideration where the Province comes into the ownership.



Nominations:

- Rob has taken leave from the Board due to his work with the Mountain.
- We are currently at 12 members, but 2 more will be voted on in May and seated in Sept.
- There are 4 in our process – participating in a year of engagement with us.
- Have a list of 120 names the Committee is still going through and vetting.



Council for Spirit and Life:

- Mike Kelly is not the Convener for Weekends and More.
- Next spring they invited Bill Wynne for a Racial Justice Day – March 29, no further info.
- The Initiation and Education Branch is focusing on the Pods that are wrapping up their 14 months of direction.
 - Next group starting in April, looking for new conveners.
 - How do we recognize the people who committed to the 14 months? Thinking of a “commissioning” of the group. This would be done over Zoom.
 - Also looking at how to keep this group involved with the Mountain and this sort of direction. Perhaps a quarterly Lectio gathering?
 - Shorter experience focusing on Clare is a possibility too.
 - How do we create a community with people so they can integrate this Franciscan life in their daily life?



Mountain on the Road:

- Had gatherings in Buffalo and Rochester, 120 people attended the two.
- Br. Joe is leading the team with a mix of students.
- Have three events planned for spring.



Young Alumni:

- This group just began. They meet less frequently but it is a strong group.
- By “young alumni” we mean those who graduated from SBU 2005 or after.

Kathy Colucci summarized work items to take from the meeting:

- Get legal counsel together to get Dan’s work.
- Auction
- Giving Tuesday
- Land
- Campaign
- Strategic plan updates
- Review our strategic plan with University Ministry.
- Make sure the Province is updated.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meetings:

February 7-8, 2025 (Zoom)
April 25-26, 2025 (Mountain)