

THE PLAN COMMISSION

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2026

1. The regularly scheduled meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. A quorum was present. Chairman Patricia Letarte, Natasha Brown Harris, Kay Frey, Linda Suwalski, Lisa Manzo (Secretary), Rudy Repa (Senior Planner) and Paul Mizner (Planner). Absent: Alma Montenegro and Teresa Badillo.
3. Member Suwalski made a motion to approve the minutes from December 17, 2025. The motion was seconded by Member Frey and approved to place them on file as presented.
4. New Business: Presentation and Discussion on Downtown Franklin Park

Mr. Repa and Mr. Mizner came forward and began a joint presentation regarding the ideas both present and future of Franklin Avenue. The following are the key points that were discussed and presented to the members for discussion.

- What they are aiming to achieve: New residential development; Create a viable brand for Franklin Park which would encompass discussion on history, logo and to raise excitement. They want to make Franklin Park the “Downtown of the Inner West Suburbs”. By creating this it would promote and create traditional shopping, housing, transit and public trails.
- New Downtown Plaza and New Mural: Promote new businesses; Existing streetscape and sign improvements. New connection to Interstate 490. Vehicle and Pedestrian Underpass at 25th Avenue and a bypass at Martens.
- Incentives for Developments: TIFs to spur development growth; Develop public lots; Business developments as well as advertising and events. Advertising my using social media, flyers, and word of mouth. Pace bus/trains/website to be created that is non-Village related that would just focus on Downtown Franklin Avenue. Events such as a Ladies Night bar crawl.
- Create New Downtown TIF and Martens Street Industrial TIF: Joining with Johnson Research Group who recently worked with the City of Chicago; Staff is early in preliminary talks/planning stages with them. Mr. Repa and Mr. Mizner described the TIF process in detail from the definition of TIF, what is the process of giving a TIF and what that means for the community and tax paying residents. They stressed that it would not change a resident’s tax bill.

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- How to get the word out to a larger audience: Hire an agency to create a brand; outreach, storytelling, designs and products. They are currently in the exploratory phase of this process.
- Looking to the Future: Staff gave ideas of installing string lights and shading elements to the downtown plaza; create night outs for restaurants and bars; create a website for the downtown area and businesses; Adopt TIFs; Utilize Plaza for more events and invest in more murals and markers.
- Medium Goals: Creating a Downtown Business Organization/Chamber of Commerce; Creating a brand/logo for the downtown district; Façade rebate program; Improve bike connectivity.
- Long term Goals: Build new residential and commercial buildings; Rebuild train station; Underpass; Build Pedestrian and Vehicular Underpass; Update Franklin Park Comprehensive Plan.

5. Public Comment:

Chairperson Letarte had some ideas regarding the Downtown District. She mentioned street arches, coupon books, pop up food venues and advertising signs to be installed along the train lines which go right through the Downtown.

6. Old Business: None.

7. Staff Update: None.

8. Member Brown Harris made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Plan Commission. It was seconded by Member Suwalski. The motion was carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa M Manzo

Lisa M. Manzo
Plan Commission Secretary