

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.

1. The regularly scheduled meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. A quorum was present. Rhonda Santana, Kathy Mennella, Wayne Bernacki, Bruce Boreson, Frank Grieshamer, Chairman Mark Cwik, Jenny Corral, Lisa Manzo (Secretary), Rudy Repa (Senior Planner) and Paul Mizner (Village Planner). All members were present.
3. Member Grieshamer made a motion to accept the minutes of February 4, 2026. The motion was seconded by Member Mennella and approved to place them on file as presented.
4. Old Business: None
5. New Business: Staff Update on recent Downtown Improvements and Future Infrastructure and Planning Initiatives.

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. Pedestrian Underpass at 25th Avenue and a Vehicle and Pedestrian Underpass at Martens.
- Incentives for Developments: TIFs to spur development growth; Develop public lots; Business developments as well as advertising and events. Advertising by 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.

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- Create New Downtown TIF and Martens Street Industrial TIF: Joining with Johnson Research Group who recently worked with the City of Chicago; Staff are 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.
- 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.

Mr. Repa and Mr. Mizner concluded their presentation at this time.

Mr. Repa and Mr. Mizner opened the meeting to the members at this time. He garnered ideas from the members on what they think or would like for Downtown Franklin Avenue as far as events, signage, branding, and miscellaneous updates to bring a broader audience to the area.

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6. Public Comment: None.

7. A motion was made by Member Grieshamer to adjourn the meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals. It was seconded by Member Mennella. All in favor. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa M Manzo

Lisa M. Manzo
Zoning Board of Appeals Secretary