

THE PLAN COMMISSION

MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2024

1. The regularly scheduled meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order at 7:20 p.m.
2. A quorum was present. Chairman Patricia Letarte, Alma Montenegro, Teresa Badillo, Linda Suwalski, Kay Frey, Ryan Adriatico (Senior Planner), and Rudolph Repa (Planner). All members were present.
3. Member Badillo made a motion to accept the minutes of March 27, 2024, as presented. Member Montenegro seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried.
4. Public Comment:
 - Resident and businessowner, Jim Wade thanked the Village for improved streetscaping and landscaping efforts that have beautified downtown. That said, Mr. Wade expressed concerns over the loss of potential surface parking that can serve businesses along Franklin Avenue. He agrees that the downtown corridor needs public amenities, however he sees parking as a higher priority. He would prefer a compromise where the surface parking can remain with improved landscaping and a water feature like a fountain.
 - Resident and building manager, Scott Shannon, echoed these comments, explaining that he agrees with the need for a public amenity like a plaza downtown, but wants more parking. As manager for a neighboring property, he relayed concerns about existing issues about parking availability during peak hours for businesses.
 - Mr. Wade and Mr. Shannon submitted the following message via email for the record:

“Dear Ryan and Rudy,

I hope this message finds you well.

I wanted to express my gratitude for the opportunity to address the Village of Franklin Park regarding the planning and design of the space across from Mike O'Donnel's Pub. It was a pleasure to contribute to the discussions on the future of our community.

As we look forward to the businesses that will eventually occupy the spaces beneath the apartments, I have some concerns about parking that I would like to share. The influx of extra cars for employees, owners, and customers is likely to

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push apartment renters to park on the street and in the areas behind the crossings. While I understand that there is parking available one to two blocks away, this distance may deter some people from patronizing the businesses due to the inconvenience of walking.

A similar issue arose in part of the downtown or business area of Park Ridge. In response, some businesses had to resort to valet parking to facilitate easier access for their customers. I believe it is crucial that future construction plans for businesses or residences include provisions for parking, such as underground parking or first-floor parking if there are businesses or residences above.

Thank you again for allowing me to share my ideas. If there is anything more I can offer to assist with this matter, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Have a wonderful day!

Best regards,
Scott Shannon
Building Manager for the Crossings”

5. New Business: Staff Update

Mr. Adriatico came forward and began a presentation discussing the proposed beautification efforts that are planned for Downtown Franklin Park. The focus of the presentation covered the recently acquired property at 9601 Franklin Avenue, a surface lot at the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Rose Street. The Village intends to redevelop the lot into a public plaza—an amenity that has been missing as an anchor downtown.

Mr. Adriatico then walked the commission through the proposed site plan and improvements which include a shared street for expanded event space, green space, stamped concrete, a fountain, improved landscaping, and a mural which design has not yet been finalized.

Mr. Adriatico explained that the property is a vital component of ongoing Village-ran beautification efforts of the downtown neighborhood. Utilizing the space that was previously a private parking lot for a public amenity will be transformational for the

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neighborhood as it acts as a gateway to Downtown Franklin Park and provides a community event space that allows residents to gather, socialize, and host community events like farmers markets, concerts, and other programs.

Mr. Adriatico identified other downtown districts with successful parks of similar scale:

- Harmony Park, Arlington Heights
- Hodges Park, Park Ridge
- Downtown Bensenville Square

He then addressed the concerns over parking, explaining that in its current iteration, the subject property contained 14 parking spaces that met Village code. These spaces were not available to the public, which means that the proposal is not removing any public parking availability with the addition of the plaza.

Additionally, Mr. Adriatico explained that the Community Development Department completed a parking study that Village Planner, Rudolph Repa will discuss in detail. Mr. Adriatico summarized that downtown Franklin Park has an abundance of parking, but that a lack of effective wayfinding and signage makes it difficult for the public to understand where there is available and legal parking spaces. He explained that the Village is currently looking to improve signage to address this issue.

Mr. Repa then showed a map outlining the available public parking options in Downtown Franklin Park. In total, there are 700 parking spaces across commuter lots, on street parking, and public parking lots which serve the downtown district.

He then discussed a study that was completed that highlights on-street parking south of the railroad tracks and excluded underutilized commuter lots and public lots that require crossing a street to access Franklin Avenue. This sample size focuses on the most utilized and convenient spaces that have the closest proximity to downtown businesses, a total of 262 parking spaces. The study observed parking capacity and parking availability at various times throughout the day from February to May. Mr. Repa explained that even during peak hours, public parking availability was never over 46% occupied at any given time. While customers and visitors may not be able to park directly in front of their destinations, this lack of usage of the most convenient parking spaces in the corridor does not indicate a need to introduce new parking options in Downtown Franklin Park.

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6. Old Business: None.
7. Staff Update: None.
8. Member Badillo made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Plan Commission. was seconded by Member Suwalski. The motion was carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Adriatico". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Ryan Adriatico
Senior Planner