

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
RETREAT/ PLANNING SESSION
FEBRUARY 21, 2026**

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a special strategic planning session on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at Fontana Lodge, Fontana Dam, NC.

1. CALL TO ORDER – MAYOR STACY GUFFEY

Mayor Stacy Guffey called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the following members present:

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis, Council Members Travis Higdon, Joe Collins, Robbie Tompa, Jeff Berry and Rita Salain

Staff members present: Town Manager Amie Owens, Finance Director Sarah Bishop, Deputy Finance Director Alison Stamey and HR Director/Town Clerk Nicole Bradley
Russ Harris Executive Director Southwestern Commission was the facilitator
Mia Overton from The Franklin Press was also present

2. STRATEGIC PLANS CONTINUED – RUSS HARRIS

Town Council discussed

Focus Area 1 – Infrastructure

Objective 1 – Main Street Redesign

Action Steps (Mayor Guffey gave an overview/update on where the Town is with the Main Street redesign project):

- Parking Study, 1-lane on Main Street and widen sidewalks, set parameters/must haves, speed cameras (include in budget), explore Main Street sign/banner, Main Street Program re-entry, 2nd floor building incentives.

The two action steps selected were engage with NC DOT on 1- lane Main Street and budget for speed cameras for speed control on Main Street.

Objective 2 - Neighborhood Revitalization

Action Steps

- Explore additional greenway connections, identify ideal sites to incentivize/revitalize, proactive enforcement/amendments to ordinances

Focus Area 2 – Economic Development

Objective 1 – Revolving Loan Fund

Action Steps

- Budget funds
- Find models, amounts, eligibility
- Educate business owners/workshops

Objective 2 – Business Retention Program/Local Business Expansion

Action Steps

- Buy local campaign
- Coordinate with downtown business association (Franklin Downtown Merchants Association)
- Rebrand business districts
- Target different districts
- Market support services

Strategic Initiatives – Timing worksheets

Town Council Members went through the objectives and made a timeline.

Russ Harris will provide a report on the Focus Areas, Objectives and Actions Steps that were discussed.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to adjourn the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Stacy Guffey, Mayor

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk