



Larry Solomon
MAYOR

September 9, 2016

Re: **Open Letter To Union Residents. State Of The Union...Union KY, that is.**

Hello Union Residents...

It has been one year and nine months since our new administration has taken office. Can you believe how fast time has flown...a few more months and we will be into the second two years of our four year term. Over the past year and nine months, we have been quite busy. I previously issued our accomplishments for the first six months and twelve months in January of this year. (This document is posted on www.cityofunionky.org website for your reference.) I would now like to issue the State of Union KY for the past nine months of our second year in office.

Past Nine Months Second Year In Office State Of Union KY.

- **New Route 536/Mt. Zion Road.** On April 15, we learned that State funding for Route 536/Mt. Zion Road was included in this year's State Transportation Budget. It had been taken out and pushed back to the 2020 fiscal year. Due to hard lobby work led by Senator John Schickel with combined support by Judge Executive Gary Moore, Representative Sal Santoro, County Administrator Jeff Earlywine, County Commissioner Cathy Flaig, and myself, the Governor and State Officials moved this project back to this fiscal year's budget. What this means is that this October this project can be bid. You will then see road construction in earnest on Mt. Zion Road sometime after this fall and into next Spring. The estimated completion will be in 2018-2019.
 - To thank these Government Officials, the city held a luncheon for them at Flipdaddy's in early May. We provided them with awards that had our new city logo and said, "Mount Zion Road. Thanks For All Your Help!" Judge Moore, Senator Schickel and Representative Santoro said, "This is how things get done when city, county and state officials work together for a common cause!"

- **New Kroger Marketplace Store.** Also in early May, Kroger hosted city officials and Union residents for their new Marketplace store ground breaking ceremony. Immediately after the ground breaking ceremony, earth started moving so building could start sometime this fall/next Spring. The goal is for the new Kroger Marketplace store to be opened for business by Mother's Day 2017. Kroger is investing more than \$25 million and bringing more than 150 new jobs to Union.
 - In addition to the new Kroger store, there will be seven out-lots on the property for stand-alone buildings...two offices and five new restaurants. Plus a strip mall of smaller restaurants and businesses. What this means is that you will now have more restaurant choices, so you do not have to go to Florence to go out to eat...unless you want to!
 - Midland Retail is working to find businesses that "most match the demographics of Union residents" to provide the best possible choices of variety and quality.
 - Additionally, Kroger is working on finding another business to take their place in the current store. The advantage Union has is that Kroger owns the building and will be renting it out to

1843 Mt. Zion Road, Union, Kentucky 41091

mayorlarry@cityofunionky.org • www.cityofunionky.org • PH. 859.384.1511 • FX. 859.384.7760

a replacement business or service. I am confident that if the current store is vacant at all, it will only be for a very short time.

- Lastly, Kroger will be building a new gas station facility adjacent to the new store. However, they will be keeping open and maintaining the existing gas station facility for greater customer convenience.
- Judge/Three Mayor Quarterly Meetings. During the first few months of our administration, we initiated greater communications with our neighboring government entities. We recommended to Judge Executive Gary Moore that the four Boone County (BC) entities (i.e., BC, Florence, Union, and Walton) meet quarterly. Previously, no communications platform existed for the CEOs of each BC government entity to come together to discuss and agree on issues. Over the past year and nine months, this platform has proven to be an effective means to greater communication. Our next meeting is November 8, 2016.
- Boone County Planning Commission (BCPC). At the last Judge/Three Mayors meeting we agreed on the following funding principles for the BCPC...1) special projects should not be included in the BCPC overall funding...separate proposals should be developed between the individual government entity and BCPC. 2) BCPC should present a proposed budget to funding members as a group before presenting to Planning and Zoning. And, 3) funding member proration be on a quantitative basis, per KRS 100.127(1), i.e., per capita basis where each funding member's proportion of payment is based on their current annual population divided by total BC current annual population. Matt Apke became Union's representative on the BCPC at the beginning of this year. His appointment has generated greater communication and synergy between the City of Union and the BCPC. He is doing an outstanding job for the City of Union.
- Union Economic Development Committee (EDC). The EDC continues to work to expand the city working with current property owners to find ways to best develop property using the town plan as their guide. Now that the new Mt. Zion road project will begin in earnest after October 1, greater interest in building the new Union KY town center is also growing. Your EDC will be the "center of the universe" when it comes to converting the Union Town Plan into the new Union Town. The BCPC will be working alongside the EDC to help and support them. I would like to thank all members of the EDC for volunteering their services and time, and Commissioner Jeremy Ramage for leading the team.
- Union Park. We will continue to be working on expanding the Union Pool to Union Park. The hope is to have a shelter facility included in this project for the city to have a new community center. BC did not include funding for this expansion in their budget for this year. We will work for it to be on next year's BC budget.
- Old Firehouse Building/Community Building. We continue to manage the Old Firehouse building. Former Administrator Martin had successfully rented out all the garage bays...3 bays for the 18 months; 2 bays for 12 months, as well as renting out the kitchen area to a small church group. This revenue continues to offset inherited monthly payments. We are now breaking even on this building...bringing in the same revenue as we are paying monthly payments for this building.
- Communications Committee. The Communications Committee is now in full operation under the direction of Travis Schraffenberger. This committee has completely revised the city's website to be more up-to-date and user friendly. With the website up, we now plan to take communications to

1843 Mt. Zion Road, Union, Kentucky 41091

mayorlarry@cityofunionky.org • www.cityofunionky.org • PH. 859.384.1511 • FX. 859.384.7760

the next level over the next year. In fact, the Commission approved the hiring of a new Communications Coordinator to better execute communications content to maximize the utility of the new website platform. Additionally, we believe that “Special Events” are a part of the communication function. The new Communications Coordinator will also be the city’s Special Events Coordinator as part of this new position.

- City Administrative Officer (CAO). On May 5, David Martin left his position as CAO. On June 6, the City Commission approved the hiring of Matthew Dowling as CAO. He started working on June 22, and has done an outstanding job from day one. The reason that we were able to fill this position quickly is that we had an excellent pool of candidates from which to choose. This excellent candidate pool came from referrals from BC, Florence, and posting the position. I want to publicly thank friends from other government entities for their recommendations...Matthew Dowling came from SD1 and was highly recommended by other government entities.
- Potential Flood Areas. The city continues to review and evaluate potential flood areas along with SD1. Matthew Dowling with his past SD1 experience will be the leading staff member doing said evaluations.
- Public Works Team. At the beginning of this administration we formed the Public Works Team. This team now consists of Administrator Dowling, Engineer Burke and Commissioner Heil. We gave them greater autonomy by giving them authority to act on project on their own (up to \$1,000) without having to wait for City Commission approvals for minor projects. This move has made it easier for them to complete city public works business and react to issues and correct them immediately. We have received all positive feedback from this administrative move.
- Resident Tax Rates. I have saved the most important issue for last. This administration did not raise resident tax rates last year...our first year in office. We do not intend to raise them this year either. Commissioners voted on September 6 to keep tax rates for Union residents to be the same as last year.

Well...that is what we have been doing for the past nine months. (Again, you can obtain our accomplishments for the first twelve months in office from the city’s website). In all, I believe we are doing a “darn good job!”

I want to thank City Commissioners for all their hard work this first term...

- Ken Heil.
- Bryan Miller.
- John Mefford.
- Jeremy Ramage.

It is a pleasure to work with these gentlemen. Now, I need two favors from each of you. First, I am asking everyone to vote on November 8. Second, I am asking that you re-elect these four Commissioners to help me with the second two years of my four year term. I fully endorse and truly need them on the City Commission for the last two years of my term, and you can help me by voting for these four fine gentlemen on November 8.

I also want to thank our staff Administrator Dowling, Clerk Porter, Attorney Voss, Engineer Burke, part-time staff, and all those volunteering to work on committees. All these individuals have helped this administration's first year and nine months to be a very successful one.

Sincerely,

Larry Solomon

Mayor Larry Solomon