

January 4 2016

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

Hello Union Residents...

It has been one year since our new administration has taken office. In July, I issued the State of Union KY for the first six months of being in office. I would like to issue the State of Union KY for the second six months of our first year in office.

First Six Months Accomplishments...issued in July 2015.

- Changed look by changing city logo and more recently painting office and purchasing new furniture.
- City Administrator (David Martin) was hired at our very first meeting in January.
- Built cooperation among Commissioners. Assigned two Commissioners to committees as representatives.
- Worked with Administrative Staff...initiated employee evaluations linked to pay increases.
 - Until this point, Administrative Staff was not systematically evaluated on a regular basis...now they are.
- Revised the Economic Development Committee (EDC).
 - Commissioner Ramage and I were assigned as Commissioner representatives. We named Matthew Apke as Chairman of this committee. We named new members and established this committee with the mission to work with Boone County Planning Commission (BCPC) to properly expand the city.
- Started to work with Boone County (Judge Moore) to expand the Union Pool area to the Union Park.
- Made some hard decisions concerning the Old Firehouse building.
 - The city purchased this building in 2008-9 for \$375,000 with a loan that has pre-payment penalty fees attached...this means that the city pays (with maintenance costs) \$100 per day for this building for the life of the loan...until 2036.
 - We also discovered that the building was "out-of-code" for it to be a community center. The cost to renovate the building to bring to code to become a community building would be \$350,000 beyond what the city already owes for the building.
 - The decision was made to not spend another \$350,000 to refurbish this old building, but to revert the building back to its original intended purpose which is a garage and to find a tenant to possibly lease the building, then rezone the area to allow for publicly parking cars within garages.
- Requested BCPC revise its Inter-Local Agreement (initiated 1966; revised last 10/1/1976), because Union is underrepresented and to give more checks and balances to BCPC.
- Created Public Works Team (Administrator Martin, Engineer Burke and Commissioner Heil) and gave them greater autonomy.
 - Given approval to accept projects up to \$1,000 without having to wait for City Commission approvals.
- Created Communications Committee.
 - The mission of this committee was to create a communications strategy for the city, then execute that strategy to inform residents of city activities and get feedback to make the City of Union a bigger part of their lives.
 - Travis Schraffenberger appointed as the chairman. Amy Lutes was appointed as member.

This was what we did the first six months of the year. Here is what we did the second six months.

Second Six Months Accomplishments

- We initiated greater communications with our neighboring government entities. We recommended to BC Judge Executive Gary Moore that the four BC entities...BC, Florence, Union, and Walton meet quarterly. So, the Judge and 3 Mayors now meet quarterly...our next meeting is January 11, 2016.
- At that meeting, the main topic will be revising the BCPC Memorandum Of Understanding...this is this commission's founding document and principals which it operates.
 - This document was last revised October 1, 1976...it is about time it got reviewed and revised.
- As of January 1, Matt Apke will become Union's representative on the BCPC. He will be taking on this role in addition to being on the city's EDC. His appointment will generate greater communication and synergy between the City of Union and the BCPC.
- 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.
- The city has had ongoing meetings and discussion with Kroger's pertaining to the building of their new Marketplace Store on Route 42 behind the Boone County Library.
 - You will soon see a sign on the property that informs everyone that construction will start Spring 2016 and be completed Spring 2017. We are obviously encouraging them to beat those timelines.
 - We are also encouraging them to have a tenant lined-up to immediately replace them in their current building...this is important to Union residents; it is also important to us!
- We 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.
- We continue to manage the Old Firehouse building. Administrator Martin has successfully rented out all the garage bays...3 bays for the next 18 months; 2 bays for next 12 months. This revenue is offsetting inherited monthly payments for this building by 60%!
 - Administrator Martin is working to rent the kitchen area for office space to further reduce building debt.
- The Communications Committee is now in the final development stage of the new City of Union website using it as a platform to execute the city's communications.
 - New members on this committee are Noreene Morgan, and Patrick Romelli.
 - Committee member, Amy Lutes was hired to be the city's part time communications coordinator. This position will support the committee's goals and initiatives under the direction of the Communications Committee and Administrator Martin.

As the 2016 legislative session begins this week, we are optimistic that final State funding for Route 536 (Mt. Zion Road) Project will be approved this session. If funding is approved, you will start to see more construction over the next year moving to a 2018-9 completion. When road construction begins in earnest, you will see the entire area growing. Our role over the next 12 months is to prepare the city for growth in a planned and systematic fashion, then effectively communicating growth status to all Union residents.

I want to thank all City Commissioners (Heil, Miller, Medford, and Ramage) for all their work this term...it is a pleasure working with these well qualified gentlemen. I also want to thank our staff Administrator Martin, 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 to be a very successful one.

Sincerely,

Larry Solomon

Mayor Larry Solomon