

*Public hearing in Florissant Feb. 13*

# Walmart wants to impose new 1% sales tax to help fund its store

**Florissant** — While Walmart rakes in billions of dollars a year and runs “mom and pop” stores out of business, the retail giant wants Florissant shoppers to subsidize the cost of building a new supercenter at North Lindbergh and New Halls Ferry Road.

Next week, the world’s most profitable company will plead its case at a public hearing, asking city officials to approve a Community Improvement District (CID) to help pay their financing costs.

**Local 655 members in the Florissant area—and anyone who opposes givebacks to a company perfectly capable of paying its own construction costs—are urged to speak out at a public hearing at 7 p.m., Monday, Feb. 13 at City Hall, 955 Rue St. Francois.**

**If the CID is approved, Walmart will charge shoppers an additional 1 percent sales tax on purchases for the next 20 years.**



COOK

**Overall, the proposed additional sales tax revenue would pull about \$3.6 million annually from the pockets of shoppers, based on average Walmart sales.**

A CID would also allow Walmart to charge the additional 1 percent sales tax not only on its own sales, but also the sales of a restaurant and a strip mall proposed for the same development.

This is the seventh time in 20 years that Walmart has attempted to build in Florissant. It was rebuffed every time. Last year the City Council rejected an \$11 million Tax Increment Financing request by Walmart, with a 9-0 thumbs-down. The TIF would have pulled sales taxes from city coffers. Now, the company wants shoppers to pay.

“Why should Walmart, the most profitable company in the world, have to have taxpayer’s money when every other major development in Florissant built their businesses the old fashioned way — with their own funds?” asked Local 655 President David Cook. “We urge all concerned Florissant residents to attend the public hearing and let the City Council know your feelings. We pay enough in taxes; to let Walmart impose more to make it easier for them to build is ludicrous.”

**AN EXCLUSIVE TWICE MONTHLY REPORT FOR**

**UFCW 655 MEMBERS & THEIR FAMILIES**

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## Local 655 Recorder and longtime Union Representative Randy Charboneau retires

After 40 years as a member of Local 655, the last 25 as a union representative, Recorder Randy Charboneau reluctantly retired on January 1. The retirement was necessary because of a continuing and serious back problem that numerous surgeries could not repair, which made it impossible for him to be continually be on his feet moving around, a necessity for field service.

“While I look forward to retirement, I am sorry to be leaving just when it’s clear that the Local is heading in such a strong and positive direction. I would have loved to be able to be a part of a bright future, but... we don’t always get what we want. I’ve accepted that and am ready to move on to the next phase of my life,” Randy said with a great deal of emotion in his voice.



CHARBONEAU

**He added: “It has been a pleasure and an honor to work on behalf of the members of Local 655 for these past 25 years. I’m proud to have been able to help many good people, and more importantly, to get to know them as friends and coworkers. I’ll miss everyone.”**

**THE BEGINNING**

After working at Schnucks for 15 years (10 years as a shop steward), in 1986 Randy came to work for Local 655 as an organizer. Three years later he was appointed a Union Representative. Last year he was elected Recorder, the Union’s third highest elected position.

During his tenure with the Union, he served as Director of Organizing, Director of Servicing, Co-chair of the Health & Welfare Fund, Trustee on the Pension Fund, and one of the

organizers and lead in our local’s ever popular annual Softball Tournament. For eight years he also served on the board of directors of the Spirit of St. Louis Credit Union.

**PRESIDENT COOK COMMENTS**

“Over my 24 years on staff there have been many individuals who influenced my development and helped me along the way. However, none more than Randy,” said President David Cook.

“When I started, I was a very rough and outspoken 27 year old,” said Cook. “I can remember Randy pulling me aside on many occasions and helping me deal with management and with members. I truly believe that without the early help and guidance Randy gave me, I would not have developed into the person I am today; I simply would not have been capable of being the local’s president.

**“Randy was a man that was respected by both members and management alike. If a member was wrong, Randy would have no problem saying so, all the while working with management to give that member another chance. At the same time, Randy would have no hesitation going toe-to-toe with management on behalf of a wronged member.**

“Given his honesty and candor with me over the years, we became best friends; outside of work we took vacations with our families and spent a great deal of our time off together,” Cook said.

Randy and his wife Linda have three wonderful children and six grandchildren all of whom live in the St Louis area. He plans on spending time with his family and do a little fishing when he has a chance, and if his back allows.

**Local 655 is losing one of our best representatives. The officers and staff of Local 655 wish Randy all the best in his retirement. His knowledge and years of experience will be missed at Local 655.**



### Local 655 Retirees Club welcomes new officers

The Local 655 Retirees Club recently welcomed new officers, swearing in (from left) Sergeant-at-Arms Bob Wonish, First Vice President Bernie Gavels, Second Vice President Alice Haub, President Craig Stankovich, Secretary Pam Rodgers, Treasurer Sharon Dragschutz and Assistant Treasurer Barb Rohr. The social club enables retirees to continue former co-worker friendships and meet others enjoying their “golden retirement years.” Retirees and spouses of deceased members are welcome.

*Labor Tribune photo*

## “Like” us on Facebook



Hey all you Facebookers, Local 655 now has a Fan page. Make sure to find us by searching UFCW Local 655, and click “Like” to join. Facebook is another tool that Local 655 can use to communicate with our members, allow our members to communicate with other members and to provide members with a way to play an interactive role in their Union. So don’t be shy, click “Like”.



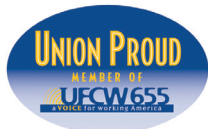
### Local 655 officers sworn in

The UFCW Local 655 Executive Board was sworn in for their new term that began on Jan. 1, and expires on Dec. 31, 2014. Retired Local 655 Recorder Terry Bowman performed the honors at the Regular Monthly Meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 24. The entire Executive Board was re-elected by acclamation on July 25, after all offices were unopposed.

President David Cook said, “It is a great honor to know that the new leadership team has the confidence of the membership.”



Say it loud



“UNION PROUD.” That is what the new Local 655 union buttons say, and that is what Local 655 members need to tell the world. “If you want good benefits, work rules and wages you need to be Union; you need to be members of Local 655.”

Wear your union button and be **UNION PROUD.**

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