



JUST ANNOUNCED: Scott Dixon announces candidacy for Mayor of Alton

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON-Alton native **Scott Dixon** announced his intentions to run for mayor of the city for the upcoming April 4, 2017 elections.

Dixon made the announcement at noon Saturday to a crowd of more than 50 gathered at **Lincoln-Douglas Square** in Alton. He highlighted his heritage as a sixth-generation Altonian as well as Alton's heritage as a "progressive and prosperous" city as his reasons for running. He was introduced by **Alton Encore Community Outreach Director Sasha Bassett**, who gave an extensive background for Dixon and spoke highly about encountering people willing to work hard for Alton after returning to the city last year.

"Alton is a passionate, intelligent, caring and very diverse city of hard-working people from all walks of life," she said.

She described living in places as varied as Chicago, the Caribbean and England, and said she returned to Alton last year to find it a very good place to live. She said it has the history and culture of a large city and the charm of a small town. She said she endorsed Dixon due to his "deep commitment and love of Alton."

That commitment and love for Alton were integral parts of Dixon's announcement speech. He described his ancestors who were the stonemasons who literally built Alton. He said some of them may have stood in that exact square and watched the debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. He said he was proud to be a part of a family who has called Alton home for more than 160 years.

"Even though I work in St. Louis, I choose to be in Alton, because it's my heart," Dixon said. "Indeed my family has a long history here, and I hope to follow it up with a bit of history myself."

Dixon acknowledged the hard times Alton has faced since the factories calling this town home started closing in the late 1960s. He said the city has had more than 15 years since the last factories left in 2000 to build itself back. He said Alton had was still in a state of decline, but expressed hope for its future.

"We are not alone in this post-industrial struggle," Dixon said. "Many other towns across the Midwest and country have turned themselves around by leveraging their assets, and we have better positioned assets and opportunities."



He said Alton had become part of the infamous "Rust Belt" spanning several former factory towns across the Midwest. Dixon said Alton's assets including the riverfront, scenic **Great River Road**, rolling hills, and its location would be easy to convert into a better future and a higher quality of life.

Alton's proximity to the confluences of some of the world's most important waterways, highly-regarded higher learning facilities, **St. Louis** and the **Migratory Bird Sanctuary**

are also valuable and under-utilized assets, Dixon said. He said the blossoming culture of Alton was also growing. He said if all these assets could be properly channeled, Alton could find itself in a new renaissance.

"We could develop active lifestyle activities for young adults by making paths through our hills," Dixon suggested. "With the right moves, our toughest years could be behind us. It's breaking my heart to see Alton suffering from stagnation. There are thousands of stories behind the statistics, and it's literally breaking families apart. I hope it becomes a place people choose to move to, that is our ultimate measure of success."

Dixon expressed regret at young people leaving Alton for places "more ahead" than Alton. He said each person moving away is another community volunteer lost, another local business shopper lost, and another person whose descendants could call Alton home lost.



The decision to run for mayor had been in the back of Dixon's mind for several years, he said. At the age of 52, Dixon decided to run for mayor after discussing the possibility with his family as well as several diverse members of the community. He made a Facebook page called "Scott Dixon for Alton" in February, and said discussing the matter with his family pushed him to make Saturday's announcement.

The following are facts about Dixon and his campaign according to a release given at his announcement:

Education: Masters Degree in business administration

Business Experience: 25 years **Dixon Distributing Company** as vice president and general manager

Entrepreneurial Experience: Started a successful small retail business in 2010

Community Involvement: Has volunteered for many non-profits for more than 25 years

Local Politics: **Alton Beautification and Clean City Committee** Chairperson, and **BridgeWest**

Interests: Dixon considers himself an "urban planning geek." He says he enjoys learning about urban planning issues such as commercial district and neighborhood stabilization, quality of life enhancement and what other cities have done to revive themselves.

Dixon also has a five-point plan for Alton's renaissance, which is described in great detail on his announcement release. The five points are as follows:

- Leverage our assets
- Focus on quality of life
- Be a welcoming place with high standards
- Teamwork, trust, transparency and a voice for everyone
- Plan for our future

More information for Dixon's campaign may be found on at Facebook.com /ScottDixonForAlton and on Twitter at Twitter.com/ScottDixonAlton. The election will be on an April 4, 2017 ballot.

(Reporter's note: I have a personal relationship with Sasha Bassett, which was not considered to be a conflict of interest for this story. Being a resident of Godfrey, I am unable to vote in Alton elections and therefore am a completely neutral party)